United Nations A/55/PV.1

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-fifth session

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 5 September 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

Temporary President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the Chairman of the delegation of Namibia

The Temporary President: I declare open the fifty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The Temporary President: Before calling on representatives to observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation in accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I propose that as we do so we also observe the International Day of Peace on this, the opening day of the fifty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly, as proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 36/67 of 30 November 1981 and 52/232 of 4 June 1998, to be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Item 124 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/55/345)

The Temporary President: Before turning to the other items on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/55/345, which has been circulated in the General Assembly Hall this afternoon. It contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that 26 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in documents A/55/345?

It was so decided.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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The Temporary President: I should also like to inform members that, since the issuance of document A/55/345, Rwanda and Togo have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

The Temporary President: This information will be reflected in an addendum to document A/55/345, to be issued.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The Temporary President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that, for the fifty-fifth session, the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Bahamas, China, Ecuador, Gabon, Ireland, Mauritius, the Russian Federation, Thailand and the United States of America.

May I take it that the States I have mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Election of the President of the General Assembly

The Temporary President: I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138, the President of the General Assembly at the fifty-fifth session should be elected from among the Western European and other States.

In this connection, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States that the group has endorsed the candidacy of His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland for the presidency of the General Assembly.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland elected by acclamation President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

I extend my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri and I invite him to assume the presidency.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the President to the podium.

Mr. Harri Holkeri took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Harri Holkeri, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session

The President: I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence in my country and myself that this election represents. I will do my best to live up to the honour of having been elected President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Let me assure each and every person here that as of today, I am the President of the membership as a whole.

The fact that this session of the General Assembly has been designated the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations makes this privilege of serving the Member States particularly momentous. This week's Millennium Summit will bring together a record number of Heads of State or Government. Co-chaired by Presidents Tarja Halonen of Finland and Sam Nujoma of Namibia, the Summit is a unique, symbolic moment. The Summit Declaration will capture the common vision of the Member States at that moment. It will guide our work not only during the Millennium Assembly but for years to come.

I am profoundly grateful to my most esteemed predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, for his tireless work to pave the way for a successful Millennium Summit and Assembly. I wish him well in all his endeavours as he continues to serve his people as the Foreign Minister of Namibia.

I also wish to salute the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for having once again shown leadership, courage and vision. His report entitled "We the peoples" (A/54/2000) laid an indispensable foundation for the work of the Summit. It has also set for us new standards in clarity of purpose, relevance and readability.

As I thank all Member States for their confidence and trust, I am particularly thankful for the endorsement of the Western European and other States Group. For Finland, this presidency comes after almost 45 years of membership in the United Nations. Over the past decades, Finland and Finns have been given the opportunity to serve the United Nations in a number of ways. Now it is my turn to serve the Organization and its General Assembly, the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations.

The Organization has been — and still is — one of the cornerstones of Finnish foreign policy. Finland is committed to multilateralism in the advancement of the purposes and principles of the United Nations, as enshrined in the Charter. For my country, multilateralism is therefore a means to promote greater social equality, democracy and human rights — and, in particular, the rights of women and girls. It is these goals and the overall goals of sustainable human development, alleviation of poverty and combating global environmental threats that are also central to Finnish development cooperation.

In the spirit of multilateralism, Finland has also participated actively in United Nations peacekeeping from the Suez to South Lebanon to the Balkans. Since the 1950s, thousands of Finnish men and women have served with devotion to support United Nations efforts to maintain peace and security.

This week's Millennium Summit and its Declaration will provide an enormous momentum which will reinforce the implementation of the global agenda and its development targets, as defined in the global conferences of the 1990s. The Declaration will constitute an authoritative mandate for our work and for my presidency.

On the agenda before us, there is one issue which is particularly close to my heart. This is primary and secondary education, particularly for girls. Education is a key element in the global economy, and we should implement our commitments in this regard.

It will be the responsibility of the General Assembly to heed the moment and put into practice the political commitment of our Heads of State or Government. The General Assembly and its Main Committees must show leadership to the rest of the United Nations system and must reflect the results of the Summit in their work. We need to avoid a business-as-usual mentality.

It is also vital that we start without delay the consideration of the recommendations of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations.

We must make every effort to make new technology available to all at low cost. I believe that information and communication technology presents a true opportunity for development, be it for reducing poverty, improving education or combating HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. It can help us better understand climate change and other environmental challenges, and even plan better neighbourhoods in place of slums. In other words, it facilitates reaching the concrete goals which are part of the upcoming Summit Declaration.

For the General Assembly, all this is an immense task. Let me now dwell on how we can accomplish it. This involves reaching out to the wider world for cooperation, increasing the transparency of the General Assembly and improving its effectiveness.

As for the Organization's outreach towards wider civil society, it is closely related to the overall relevance of the United Nations. This is a challenge the United Nations can either accept and grow with or shy away from and stop growing. The norm should be dialogue and inclusion. The emergence of a strong and viable global network of non-governmental organizations is a fact. We all know that their work is indispensable and that it complements the role of the United Nations in many fields. This was evidenced most recently in the Millennium Forum; I hope that Governments will take time to reflect on the outcome of that Forum.

The private sector is part of civil society. The United Nations is currently exploring new ways to cooperate with the private sector so as to assure that it takes due note of our work and standards for mutual benefit. In this regard, I would like to express my support for the recent initiatives of the Secretary-General.

Furthermore, our goal must be to enhance the understanding, collaboration and complementarity of activities between the United Nations and the international financial institutions.

To be effective, and to get due credit, the General Assembly must work in a transparent and understandable manner. In order not to become a hermit kingdom, understood only by United Nations experts, the General Assembly must be able to explain why its work is relevant to the outside world. As President, my aim is to work in an open way. That will also be one of my requests to the Chairpersons of the Main Committees and to the Secretariat.

I strongly believe that in order to add value and make a difference, the General Assembly must address, in a focused, meaningful and timely manner, the challenges of rapid change and globalization. In doing so, it must respond to the current priorities of its Member States. This requires courage to look back at the original legislative intent of the General Assembly and at how that can be best reflected in the practical work of the Organization today.

Yet the General Assembly is not only about specific mandates and accomplishments. To engage in a dialogue on an equal basis, the global community needs the General Assembly. Between nations, even the most expensive dialogue is immeasurably cheaper than the cheapest armed conflict. The power of dialogue in the service of development is well demonstrated by the goals agreed upon by the global conferences of the 1990s.

As in any parliament, there is bound to be a certain degree of partisanship and political manoeuvring in the General Assembly. After all, there are genuine differences in Member States' interests and world views. However, the General Assembly can lose its effectiveness if this turns into a stifling bloc mentality and an us-versus-them mindset. During this Millennium Assembly, I plead with Member States to work in the spirit of partnership and solidarity.

As I see the role of the President of the General Assembly, it is one of facilitator, conciliator and consensus-builder. He must lead — and I will do so — but without the membership on board, that leadership will ultimately fail. During this General Assembly session, we will have to make hard and at times unpleasant decisions. These decisions require a spirit of dialogue and inclusion from all of us.

I will make every effort to guide the work of the Assembly in an effective manner. I harbour no illusions about quick solutions. I believe it is often the practical and small things which count and ultimately add up to a change. One such step will be to always start the plenary meetings of the Assembly on time. I trust that the Chairpersons of the Main Committees will commit themselves to the same practice at the committee level. This is not only about sensible use of our common resources; it is the least we can do to show respect and courtesy towards one another.

I will also seek close and regular dialogue with the Chairpersons and Bureaux of the Main Committees, as well as with the Secretariat. The six Chairpersons that we are about to elect are very much the backbone of the daily work of the General Assembly. I also intend to maintain regular contacts with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

As for the Secretariat, it provides an indispensable partner without which our work would stall. I salute the staff members of the Organization — at Headquarters as well as in the field — for their dedication, commitment and hard work. I would like to pay special tribute to those staff members who, even at this moment, put their lives in danger in the service of this Organization.

I believe in people and I believe in the United Nations. I am convinced that we can live in peace and harmony, because the power of common values and goals exceeds our differences. Our strength lies in the diversity of humankind and in our different backgrounds, skills, and knowledge. As a father and grandfather, I dream of a better world for my children and theirs.

During my tenure, I will do my best to serve the United Nations and all its Member States. In this task, I need your support and assistance. I would like to invite everyone to work together during this Millennium Assembly. Let us not be afraid of the difficulties and uncertainties ahead. Instead, let us build on cooperation, mutual understanding, and trust.

I thank you for your attention.

Item 19 of the provisional agenda

Admission of new Members to the United Nations

Application for admission (A/54/699)

Letter from the President of the Security Council (A/54/758)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.1)

The President: In accordance with the procedure followed in the past, I should now like to invite the General Assembly to consider, under item 19 of the provisional agenda entitled "Admission of new Members to the United Nations", the positive recommendation by the Security Council for the admission to membership in the United Nations of Tuvalu.

This special procedure has been applied previously in order to give States recommended by the Security Council for membership in our Organization the opportunity, if the General Assembly acts favourably on their requests, to participate from the outset in the work of the session.

If there is no objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

The President: The Security Council has recommended the admission of Tuvalu to membership in the United Nations, as stated in document A/54/758. In this connection, a draft resolution has been submitted in document A/55/L.1.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since its introduction the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.1: Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, Slovenia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Trinidad and Tobago.

May I take it that the General Assembly accepts the recommendation of the Security Council and adopts the draft resolution by acclamation?

Draft resolution A/55/L.1 was adopted (resolution 55/1).

The President: I therefore declare Tuvalu admitted to membership in the United Nations.

It is my pleasure on this historic occasion to welcome, on behalf of the General Assembly, Tuvalu as a full Member of the United Nations. I congratulate Tuvalu and the United Nations on the admission of its 189th Member State.

I am confident that this newly admitted Member State will contribute to the General Assembly and to the United Nations efforts in addressing the issues in international relations that lie ahead.

I wish the Government and the people of Tuvalu peace, prosperity, happiness and every success for the future. I wish to assure Tuvalu of the full support of the United Nations as it takes its rightful place in the international community as a free, independent, sovereign and peace-loving State.

I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Kahende (Kenya): I wish first to take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri upon his assumption of the high office of President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. I thank him for the commitment he made in his statement to serve mankind effectively during his tenure of office through contacts and dialogue. My delegation has no doubt, and Africa has no doubt, that the Millennium Summit, which kicks off tomorrow, will pose a most challenging start to that promise. We assure him of Africa's total support and assistance.

Allow me at the same time to thank an illustrious son of Africa, The Honourable Theo-Ben Gurirab for the excellent job he did in the discharge of his duties during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Turning to the duty that has brought me before the Assembly, Kenya, in its capacity as the Chairman of the African Group for the month of September, and, indeed, on its own behalf, takes this opportunity to congratulate Tuvalu upon joining the United Nations as the 189th Member of our Organization.

Indeed, the family of United Nations is now inching closer to the fulfilment of one of the key principles of our Organization: the recognition of the value of the independence of all peoples. Africa pledges its fullest cooperation to Tuvalu as it begins to discharge its international obligations.

The President: I now call on the representative of Japan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): It is a great pleasure, honour and privilege for me to address the General Assembly, on behalf of all the Member States of the Asian Group, at the opening of its fifty-fifth session. I would like to offer to you, Mr. President, the warmest congratulations of the Asian Group on your election as President of this body. I am confident that, with the benefit of your able leadership and wide-ranging experience, the General Assembly will respond wisely and effectively to the needs and expectations of the international community during this historic Millennium Assembly. You may rest assured of the full support and cooperation of the Member States of the Asian Group as you carry out the responsibilities of your high office.

I would also like to express the profound appreciation of the Asian Group to the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab. Thanks to his excellent guidance and dedicated efforts throughout the fifty-fourth session, we were able to make significant progress in addressing the challenges facing the international community. We are also grateful for his admirable leadership and inexhaustible patience in smoothly preparing for the historic Millennium Summit. We are confident that his valuable contributions will ensure the success of the Millennium Summit.

It is my particular pleasure to congratulate Tuvalu on its admission to the United Nations. On behalf of all the Member States of the Asian Group, as well as of my own country, Japan, I would like to extend the warmest welcome to this newest Member of the Organization.

The admission of Tuvalu to the family of nations is of great significance, as it strengthens the universality of the United Nations and thus enhances its legitimacy and effectiveness. The addition of Tuvalu to United Nations membership is yet another reminder of the importance of focusing greater attention on the problems facing small island developing States.

We, the Member States of the Asian Group, extend our best wishes to the Government and the people of Tuvalu on this landmark occasion in their country's history. We all look forward to working closely with Tuvalu in pursuing the goals and objectives enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The President: I now call on the representative of the Russian Federation, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): It is my privilege and honour to address the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. Our gratitude goes to the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab.

On behalf of the Eastern European States, I have the great honour of expressing our congratulations to Tuvalu on the historic occasion of its admission to membership in the United Nations. We note with great satisfaction Tuvalu's solemn commitment to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to fulfil all the obligations contained therein. Today, Tuvalu has joined us as a full-fledged Member of the United Nations, and we are prepared to work closely with its representatives.

In the light of the advent of the new millennium, which affords us an opportunity to reflect on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, we find it particularly symbolic that the family of peace-loving nations has been joined by yet another Member. We hope that the participation of Tuvalu in the Organization will benefit all Members as we work to address pressing challenges that fall within the ambit of the United Nations.

Once again, on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I would like to convey to the delegation of Tuvalu and to all the people of that country, our most heartfelt welcome to the United Nations.

The President: I now call on the representative of Sweden, who will speak on behalf of Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Schori (Sweden): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and to pledge to you the full support of the Group of Western European and other States.

I would also like to express our heartfelt thanks for the impressive leadership demonstrated by Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the Foreign Minister of Namibia, during the previous session.

I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States to congratulate and welcome Tuvalu as a new Member State of the United Nations. I would like to pay special respect to the Head of Government of Tuvalu, who is present here on this historic day for his country.

The admission of new Member States always constitutes an event for the Organization. The United Nations is a truly unique Organization of sovereign States based on the principle of mutual respect and the equality of all its Members, regardless of geometrical dimension or population. Each new Member State brings to this forum its own characteristics, history and culture, which enriches the family of nations.

The new Member State and its people have faced great challenges in coping with the elements of nature. We have no doubt that this new Member will participate actively and strengthen the South Pacific perspective in the work of our Organization, and at the same time provide for a more secure and prosperous future for its people.

We, the members of the Group of Western European and other States, look forward to developing a close working relationship and friendship with the representatives of Tuvalu.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Ms. King (United States of America): In my capacity as representative of the host country, I would like to extend warm congratulations to Tuvalu as it becomes a Member of the United Nations on this historic day. The adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution admitting this newest Member State to the United Nations recognizes its sovereignty, its independence and its readiness to take its place in the community of nations.

As we work to advance the goals of a peaceful and prosperous international community, I am sure that Tuvalu's participation in the United Nations will benefit all Members. I look forward to working with the representatives of Tuvalu, whom I trust will bring a fresh perspective to the work of the Organization.

Once again, on behalf of the United States, I would like to convey to Prime Minister Ionatana Ionatana and his delegation, who are here with us today, our most heartfelt welcome to the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Federated States of Micronesia, who will speak on behalf of the members of the South Pacific Forum.

Mr. Nakayama (Federated States of Micronesia): I have the honour to address the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly and to make this statement on behalf of the following South Pacific countries that are Members of this body: Australia, my own country, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Fiji Islands, Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu.

Let me, however, at the very outset offer the warm congratulations of the South Pacific Group to you, Mr. President, on your election to guide the fifty-fifth session of this body at this historic opening of a new millennium. With your leadership and wide-ranging experience, we are confident that this session of the General Assembly will deal effectively with the many important and monumental tasks facing the Assembly. I assure you of the full support and best wishes of the South Pacific Group as you carry out the task of your high office.

Let me also extend our most profound appreciation to outgoing President Theo-Ben Gurirab, whose dedicated efforts guided the fifty-fourth session of the Assembly to a successful conclusion. His untiring efforts have smoothly paved the way for the Millennium Assembly, and prepared us for the Millennium Summit.

We welcome the adoption by the Assembly of the resolution admitting another Member to our ranks. This resolution is of particular significance to the South Pacific Group, as this new Member of the United Nations family, the small island State of Tuvalu, is truly one of our own and a sister island member of our Pacific Forum, to which the South Pacific Group here at the United Nations belongs.

While we extend our best wishes and congratulations to the Government and people of Tuvalu and celebrate with them on this momentous

occasion in their history, the South Pacific Group would like to state its sincere appreciation to the United Nations Security Council for its wise decision to recommend the admission of Tuvalu to membership in this body. Our heartfelt appreciation also goes out to the many members of the Organization who have also joined in co-sponsoring and supporting the resolution on Tuvalu's admission to the United Nations.

This is the second time in a row that a new Member of the Organization comes from the ranks of small island developing States. Last year, the Assembly admitted the three Pacific small island developing States of Kiribati, Nauru and Tonga. And today, Tuvalu, another small island country from the Pacific, is being admitted. While today's admission of another small island country is symbolic and further strengthens the universality of the United Nations, its significance is not totally lost on many of us who share the same vulnerabilities and problems that island countries like Tuvalu face. Our smallness and isolation have not insulated us from the impact of decisions made elsewhere.

We have decided, although with great sacrifices of scarce resources, to join the Organization. We have also decided that we must participate with the rest of the world and contribute constructively in what little way we can to the work of this body. We come to the United Nations with high aspirations and confidence that our participation as Members of this body will further advance the cause of sustainable development for small island developing States. With renewed dedication and commitments by Members of the United Nations, the past efforts of this body will not be lost in the new millennium.

In closing, I wish once again to refer to our joy and humility at being permitted to speak on this occasion as we welcome Tuvalu to membership in the Organization.

Address by Mr. Ionatana Ionatana, Prime Minister of Tuvalu

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Tuvalu.

Mr. Ionatana Ionatana, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, The Honourable Mr. Ionatana Ionatana, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Ionatana (Tuvalu): On behalf of the people of Tuvalu, allow me first to extend a warm greeting of friendship to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. I congratulate Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland on his election as President of the General Assembly.

I offer my sincere gratitude for the kind words expressed on behalf of the Groups of African States, Asian States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, Western European and other States, the host country, the United States, and, last but certainly not least, our neighbour States of the Pacific Islands Forum.

I also wish to convey my deepest thanks to our sponsor States, the Security Council and the General Assembly for the honour of being made the 189th State Member of the United Nations.

This is a special day in the history of Tuvalu. To be a Member of the United Nations has made us very proud. To be a Member symbolizes how far we have come since independence. But we are humbled too: humbled because Tuvalu is a small country; humbled because Tuvalu is taking on new obligations; humbled because we are confronting the franchise of the United Nations, which is immense: the promotion of peace and prosperity all over the world. In accordance with our faith, I want to give thanks to Almighty God — the God of Tuvalu and of all nations — for providing his guidance to Tuvalu and the United Nations as a whole.

Tuvalu was once a British colony, part of the then Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Tuvalu came under British jurisdiction in 1877. A British protectorate was named in 1892, with colony status conferred in 1916. In 1975, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony was decoupled. The Ellice Islands became Tuvalu. A traditional name, the word Tuvalu means "eight islands standing together", in reference to the land on which we have lived for centuries.

On 1 October 1978, Tuvalu celebrated its independence. At the time, many observers said Tuvalu statehood was a false promise. Tuvalu's future was described as bleak. The country had problems too enormous to overcome. It was too remote, too small, too poor. Today, as we stand here in the General

Assembly, it would appear that those who doubted the worthiness of Tuvalu statehood have been proven wrong.

Tuvalu has a rich culture, a deep faith in Christianity and a high respect for education. All three things — culture, faith and education — are the foundations of modern Tuvalu. But by no means have we struggled alone. Our life under British colonial administration taught us a great deal. Most importantly, we learned how to run a Government and build a public service. In the years since, we have benefited from a seemingly endless supply of support and goodwill from the international community. This has produced a lasting legacy of development, for which we are eternally grateful.

In the last two decades, Tuvalu has steadily matured politically and economically. We are now committing our own resources to development, including and especially education. Tuvalu's private sector is small but growing. National infrastructure is gradually expanding. Ultimately, our goal is to eliminate foreign aid. In that regard, we recognize the critical role information technology will play in the twenty-first century. As remote as we are, the Internet has brought the world to our doorstep, and in return Tuvalu is spreading its country domain name, .TV, around the world.

By any measure, the twentieth century was a remarkable journey for the people of Tuvalu. In the span of just a few generations, we emerged from eight tiny islands in the Pacific Ocean, little known to the outside world. Traditionally, we are fishermen, planters and traders. We lead simple lives that meet our basic needs. As we have progressed, we have taken on occupations in fields new to us, such as electrical engineering and computer science. We have adopted new sources of energy, new forms of communication, a new legal system and the Westminster model of democratic government. Today, we start a new occupation in the United Nations as our journey continues into the twenty-first century.

The culture of Tuvalu is guided by the principles of courtesy and the search for consensus, rather than confrontation and divisiveness. We are careful to balance the assertion of individual rights with the needs of the community. This is our tradition. We believe that these basic principles also rest at the heart of the United Nations. The principles of courtesy, consensus and respect for others will be the foundation of our presence here in the General Assembly.

The United Nations, through its vast array of specialized agencies, has been a generous supporter of Tuvalu. Since our independence, the United Nations has helped Tuvalu in areas as diverse as public health, public sector reform, private enterprise, agriculture, education, fisheries, trade, handicrafts, medicine and water — the list goes on. I might add that recent United Nations reforms, which have made it more attractive for smaller States to join the Organization, was a turning point in our decision to apply for membership. Our relationship with the United Nations is now deeper than ever before and, because of that, Tuvalu's place in the world is more secure than ever.

Tuvalu is a growing participant in regional and international affairs. We are a party to numerous United Nations conventions. We are active members of many regional and international bodies, including a number of United Nations agencies. We are a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States in partnership with the European Union. Last Friday, 1 September, Tuvalu became a full member of the Commonwealth.

In Tuvalu, we are concerned about liberalized trade and increasing globalization. On the one hand, we recognize the long-term benefits of free trade, especially on a global scale; on the other, economic globalization has enormous force, over which we have little control or influence. We would be alarmed if a side effect of globalization eroded our customs and undermined our culture. Because Tuvalu is small, the risk we face is great, but Tuvalu owes its survival to itself and for that we owe our ancestors an unrepayable debt.

We are also concerned about global climate change and the consequences of atmospheric warming, in particular rising sea levels. Worldwide, carbon dioxide emissions are still increasing. Emission targets are not being met. We urge the Members of the United Nations family, in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol, to combat this threat more aggressively before it is too late. As members of the Assembly know, we in the Pacific are especially vulnerable. We live on small islands, and on small islands, land is priceless. Losing it as a result of rising sea levels would be a tragic, irreplaceable loss.

The Pacific islands are not always peaceful, but the world is not a perfect place. Often, the ripples from a political event reach across the Pacific region. As in many of our neighbour States, exposure to such events, even indirect exposure, can mean that stability and security are put at risk. In times of political instability, what the region needs most is international support aimed at conciliation and economic recovery. This benefits not just one country, but all Pacific island States. The challenges facing the Pacific are those not of the Forum family only, but of the international community at large, for we all share a common interest in community stability and security.

We know what a privilege it is to be standing in the General Assembly Hall as an equal Member, despite our small population, economy and geographic size, but I like to think that we have earned our place.

Tuvalu has embarked on a new voyage. Our entry into the United Nations is a message of hope for our people. We are confident that the United Nations will steer us safely through unfamiliar waters so that we can achieve our goals and expectations. May God be with us on our journey. May God bless the United Nations and may God bless the hopes and dreams of Tuvalu. Tuvalu for God, God for Tuvalu.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Tuvalu for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ionatana, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Barbados, Her Excellency Miss June Yvonne Clarke, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Miss Clarke (Barbados): I count it an honour and a privilege to be able to address the General Assembly on the occasion of the opening of the fifty-fifth session. Even as I take this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. President, as you take up the reins of leadership of this Assembly, I must also apologize for my late arrival. Regrettably, this is part of the great security activity which is going on and which necessitated my going from one gate to another on the long routing. So please accept my apologies.

The Barbados delegation, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), has the honour to congratulate and welcome Tuvalu on the occasion of its admission into the family of nations, the United Nations. It is perhaps fitting that Barbados should be chairing GRULAC on this illustrious occasion of the event of the Millennium Assembly in the year 2000 and has the significant honour of welcoming another small island State into the international community, for GRULAC has its full quota of small island developing States. Of the many nations, large and small, powerful and weak, gathered to guide the United Nations into the twenty-first century, the entry of Tuvalu into the United Nations reminds us of the role the Organization must continue to play into the new millennium, insofar as the protection of the vulnerable States of the world and the vulnerable peoples of the world is concerned.

We, the member States of GRULAC, are very familiar with the history and background of Tuvalu, which has emerged from colonialism, as so many of our own member States have done — some in the distant past, some in the not-so-distant past and some in the more recent past. The geography of Tuvalu tells us that one of the world's smallest and most resourceful nations, with 10,000 people and a total land area of 26 square kilometres, encompassing an amazing 1.3 million square kilometres of ocean, is quite a place. History reveals it has been an independent State since 1978 and a member of the former British Commonwealth. Thus, Tuvalu shares with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries that are the smallest members of GRULAC a similar colonial heritage.

As this small island developing State enters the United Nations family, it has a democratic Constitution monarchy, with a 12-member Parliament, elected every five years by universal adult suffrage. It shares with other small island States the problems of creating sustainable growth, maintaining good governance and the protection of its sovereignty in the new globalized world.

At the United Nations, we have monitored the emergence of the nation of Tuvalu from the indecision of their fate as forgotten peoples of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Even with few resources, the spirit of independence of Tuvalu could not be denied. After a referendum in 1979, the people of the Ellice Islands voted overwhelmingly to separate from the people of the Gilbert Islands. This separation became effective on 1 October 1978, and Tuvalu became independent.

The small island developing State of Tuvalu has gained membership in the United Nations at a most significant time in the history of this Organization. During this historic Millennium Assembly, the Members of this global community will seek to make the goals and the work of the United Nations more relevant to its Members in these swiftly changing times. Given the overwhelming problems that confront us, Tuvalu's membership as one of the smallest of the United Nations family aptly reminds us that today the goals of the United Nations Charter remain very relevant.

On behalf of the member States of GRULAC, it gives my delegation great pleasure to welcome Tuvalu into our family of nations. We believe, as the Security Council noted in February of this year, that Tuvalu will hold to its commitment to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and to fulfil all the obligations contained therein.

The President: I would like to announce that the flag of Tuvalu will be raised at a ceremony which will take place in front of the delegates' entrance immediately following the adjournment of the 2nd plenary meeting this afternoon.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.

United Nations A 55/PV.2

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 5 September 2000, 4.50 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 4.50 p.m.

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Election of the officers of the Main Committees

The President: I should like to inform members that the following representatives have been elected Chairpersons of the six Main Committees of the Assembly and are accordingly members of the General Committee for the fifty-fifth session:

First Committee: Mr. Mya Than (Myanmar)

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee): Mr. Matia Mulumba Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda)

Second Committee: Mr. Alexandru Niculescu (Romania)

Third Committee: Mrs. Yvonne Gittens-Joseph (Trinidad and Tobago)

Fifth Committee: Mr. Gert Rosenthal (Guatemala)

Sixth Committee: Mr. Mauro Politi (Italy)

I congratulate the Chairpersons on their election.

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly

The President: Pursuant to rule 31 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly.

All members of the General Assembly are eligible in this election except those already represented in the General Committee, namely those countries whose representatives have been elected to the presidency of the General Assembly or to the chairmanships of the Main Committees.

In accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of the annex to resolution 33/138, the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session shall be elected according to the following pattern:

(a) Six representatives from African States;

(b) Five representatives from Asian States;

(c) One representative from an Eastern European State;

(d) Three representatives from Latin American and Caribbean States;

(e) One representative from Western European and other States;

(f) Representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

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00-63085 (E)

In accordance with paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, the election of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly by secret ballot will be dispensed with when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled. We shall proceed accordingly.

I shall now read the names of the endorsed candidates:

African States: Burkina Faso, Comoros, Gabon, Guinea, Mozambique, Tunisia.

Asian States: Bhutan, Kuwait, Maldives, Uzbekistan, Yemen.

Eastern European States: Belarus.

Latin American and Caribbean States: El Salvador, Haiti, Suriname.

Western European and other States: Turkey.

Since the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each region, I declare those candidates elected, in addition to the representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The following States have therefore been elected to vice-presidencies of the General Assembly: Belarus, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, China, Comoros, El Salvador, France, Gabon, Guinea, Haiti, Kuwait, Maldives, Mozambique, the Russian Federation, Suriname, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the States which have been elected Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly.

With the Chairmen of the six Main Committees and the 21 Vice-Presidents elected, the General Committee for the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly has now been fully constituted in accordance with rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

The 1st meeting of the General Committee will be held on Wednesday, 6 September 2000, at 8 p.m.

Letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences (A/55/312)

The President: The Assembly will now turn its attention to document A/55/312 containing a letter dated 16 August 2000 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly. Members are aware that, pursuant to section I, paragraph 7, of Assembly resolution 40/243, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during the main part of a regular session of the Assembly, unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

As indicated in the letter I have just mentioned, the Committee on Conferences recommended that the General Assembly authorize, among others, the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, as well as the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to meet during the main part of the fifty-fifth session.

Having been informed by the Secretariat that the meetings of these two subsidiary organs will begin early in the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly, may I take it that the General Assembly adopts the recommendation of the Committee on Conferences for these two subsidiary organs?

It was so decided.

Organization of work of the General Assembly: the Millennium Summit of the United Nations

The President: Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to briefly recall a few organizational matters concerning the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, which, under sub-item (b) of item 61 of the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session, will take place from 6 to 8 September 2000, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 53/202 of 17 December 1998, 54/254 of 15 March 2000, 54/261 of 10 May 2000 and 54/281 of 11 August 2000.

Owing to the unique symbolic moment of the Millennium Summit, the Head of State of the country of the President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly and the Head of State of the country of the President of the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly will jointly preside over the Summit.

The Summit is composed of six plenary meetings on the basis of two meetings a day, as well as four interactive round-table sessions. The morning plenary

meetings will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and the afternoon plenary meetings from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

At the opening meeting, tomorrow morning, the first speakers will be the two co-chairpersons of the Millennium Summit, the Secretary-General, and the head of State of the host country of the Organization. In order to accommodate all speakers at the Millennium Summit, statements should not exceed five minutes.

As for the four round tables, the round table to be held on Wednesday, 6 September, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. will be chaired by His Excellency Mr. Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore.

The round table to be held on Thursday, 7 September, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. will be chaired by His Excellency Mr. Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland.

The round table to be held on Thursday, 7 September, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. will be chaired by His Excellency Mr. Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The round table to be held on Friday, 8 September, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. will be chaired by His Excellency Mr. Abelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

I should further like to inform members that the round tables will take place in Conference Rooms 5 and 6, at the garden level. Each head of State or head of Government or head of delegation attending the round tables may be accompanied by two advisers.

Accredited representatives and observers not attending the round tables will be able to follow the proceedings of the round tables via closed-circuit television in the overflow room, that is in Conference Room 3.

I remind Member States that the flag of Tuvalu will be raised at a ceremony that will take place in front of the delegates' entrance immediately following this meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.

United Nations A/55/PV.3

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

3rd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 6 September 2000, 9 a.m.
New York

Co-Chairperson Ms. Tarja Halonen ..... (President of the Republic of Finland)
Co-Chairperson Mr. Sam Nujoma ..... (President of the Republic of Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 9.25 a.m.

Item 61 (b) of the provisional agenda*

The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

The Millennium Summit of the United Nations

First meeting of the Summit

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): I declare open the Millennium Summit of the United Nations.

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Statements by the two Co-Chairpersons of the Summit

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): We meet today at the United Nations to celebrate the new millennium and to declare our vision for the future. We have come together sent by the peoples of our common globe. We articular authority. It will resonate for years to come and guide the efforts of the international community.

We have a task and we need to fulfil it. Our task is threefold: we need to meet the demands of the outside world, we need to clarify the role of the United Nations in world affairs and we need to change the United Nations to be a modern, effective Organization.

The world outside this building is changing with an ever greater speed. Humankind faces both daunting challenges and unprecedented opportunities. We need to act together to address globalization. We must make the best of the opportunities and face the challenges with wisdom, justice and courage. It is our responsibility to save the environment — our common heritage — for future generations.

The human being is at the centre of our work. Every human being is valuable. We need to work together as fellow citizens and partners: women and men, black and white, children and adults, rich and poor, strong and weak. Together we are strong.

I salute you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your report, which has been valuable in inspiring the Millennium Declaration. The overriding theme of your report is globalization, which in itself is an embodiment of the challenges, opportunities and rapid change. We know the causes and many of the consequences of globalization. This gives us an opportunity to influence the change for the better. This is the core of your report and the resolute message of our Declaration.

We the peoples make the critical choices. A global marketplace is an effective means of creating

* A/55/150.

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00-63216 (E)

and distributing wealth, but it must be governed by a fair set of rules, by the people and for the people. Also at the national level the key to development and progress is democracy, respect for human rights, rule of law and good governance. Without a solid domestic foundation, a country will fail even under the best of global rules.

Our planet is a global village, but not all the houses are alike. This village suffers from poverty. To eradicate poverty we need solidarity. Solidarity grows from individuals.

There is a continued need for multilateralism. In an interdependent world, no nation is an island and everybody's fortunes are linked. The United Nations is the stronghold of multilateralism and should continue to be so.

This Millennium Summit is the moment to reflect on the future of the United Nations. The United Nations is often the only one out in the field to assist, to advise and to build institutions. It is imperative that the Member States give it the means and resources that will enable the Organization to fulfil its mandate.

We cannot expect the United Nations to accomplish everything alone. To be successful and credible, it must act in partnership with other organizations and with the civil society. We must make the Organization reflect the world as it is today.

I have just declared the Millennium Summit open. Let us feel the humility and a sense of history of this moment. Let us turn this into an event which will make a difference. Let us also use to the fullest the opportunity to meet together and bilaterally, and to reach a meeting of minds. Let us feel our responsibility towards our fellow citizens. We have the means if we have the will. Let us make this Millennium Summit a great success.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia and Co-Chairperson of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): I am mindful of what our seating arrangement represents for all those present and in the eyes of the world. By a happy coincidence of circumstances, the two Heads of State of Finland and of Namibia are co-chairing this historic Millennium Summit. We will, naturally, rely on the wise counsel and assistance of our illustrious Secretary-General.

This arrangement was made because the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly was under the presidency of my compatriot, the Honourable Theo-Ben Gurirab, Namibia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the fifty-fifth session will be under the presidency of Mr. Harri Holkeri, former Prime Minister of Finland, who started his work yesterday. I am grateful and thank my colleagues and delegations for this honour. I am most delighted to congratulate my dear colleague and Co-Chairperson, Her Excellency Tarja Halonen, President of Finland, on her election. I renew, once again, my pledge and determination before you all to do all I can to work hard and make a meaningful contribution towards the achievement of the best possible conclusion of the Summit, of which all of us and future generations will be proud.

Peoples of the world have high expectations for social change; determination to put things right; to put men and women on the same footing before the law; to conquer fear, poverty and alienation in society; and to use the benefits of science and technology for peace, human security, empowerment of the poor, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

We have come to United Nations Headquarters to exchange views and agree on all the necessary steps that we must take, individually and collectively, to strengthen "the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century". We are here because we believe in the United Nations, in its Charter and in the common objectives and principles for which our indispensable Organization stands. We are here as world leaders. And now is the time and today is the day for a new beginning to give renewed impetus to peace, cooperation, development, security and stability in the world.

United Nations peace operations are another area of common concern. Armed conflicts and civil wars, as well as the vicious and destructive acts of terrorist groups, are condemnable things that perpetuate human suffering and severe hardship in the world. It is in this connection that the recent release of the Brahimi report (A/55/305) on United Nations peace operations is so important and timely. This much awaited report has been placed before the Millennium Summit and we must consider it as our own plan of action.

As Heads of State and Government and eminent personalities, we must add our voices to the call for the observance of the Olympic Truce during the forthcoming Olympiad, which will be held at Sydney, Australia, from 15 September to 1 October 2000. Our message for global solidarity, goodwill and human brotherhood must be clear and solemn. We are doing this in the spirit of building a peaceful and better world through sport. May peace prevail on earth.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I much regret to have to open our proceedings on a sombre note. The safety of United Nations personnel in both peacekeeping and humanitarian missions is a matter of vital concern to all of us. Before delivering my prepared statement, therefore, I must inform heads of State and heads of Government of a tragedy that has occurred in West Timor. A few hours ago, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Atambua was deliberately attacked by a militia opposed to the independence of East Timor. My Special Representative in East Timor has informed me that at least three international staff were killed. The rest of the staff are being evacuated to East Timor.

This tragedy underlines once again the dangers faced by unarmed humanitarian workers serving the United Nations in conflict or post-conflict situations. The Security Council and I myself have repeatedly expressed concern about the safety of United Nations personnel in the field, both military and civilian. I have taken up the matter with the Indonesian Government at the highest level, and I will keep the Assembly informed about developments.

May I ask the Assembly to observe a minute of silence in honour of those brave colleagues who have lost their lives.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The Secretary-General: Ladies and gentlemen, I am deeply honoured to welcome you all. Never before have the leaders of so many nations come together in a single assembly. This is a unique event, a unique opportunity, and therefore a unique responsibility. You, ladies and gentlemen, are the leaders to whom the world's peoples have entrusted their destiny. They look to you to protect them from the great dangers of our time, and to ensure that all of them can share in its great achievements.

In an age when human beings have learned the code of human life and can transmit their knowledge in seconds from one continent to another, no mother in the world can understand why her child should be left to die of malnutrition or preventable disease. No one can understand why they should be driven from their home, or imprisoned and tortured for expressing their beliefs. No one can understand why the soil their parents tilled has turned to desert or why their skills have become useless and their family is left hungry. People know that these challenges cannot be met by one country alone, or by government alone. Change cannot be held back by frontiers. Human progress has always come from individual and local initiatives, freely devised and then freely adapted elsewhere.

Your job as political leaders is to encourage such initiatives, to make sure that they are not stifled and that all your peoples can benefit from them, and to limit, or compensate for, the adverse effects that change always has on some people, somewhere. Your peoples look to you for a common effort to solve their problems. They expect you to work together, as Governments. And they expect you to work with all the other institutions — profit and non-profit, public and private — where human beings join hands to promote their ideas and their interests.

People want to see this happen between neighbouring countries, and among all the countries of each region. But since today's biggest challenges are global, they expect above all that we will work together at the global level, as the United Nations.

My friends, that is why we are here. We are here to strengthen and adapt this great institution, forged 55 years ago in the crucible of war, so that it can do what people expect of it in the new era, an era in which the rule of law must prevail.

Last month I sent you a report (A/55/305), produced by a Panel of experts, which makes detailed suggestions for strengthening the United Nations in the crucial area of peace and security, the area where people look especially to the State, and where the world's peoples look to the United Nations, to save them "from the scourge of war". Please consider that report very seriously.

It is not only in that field, however, that the United Nations needs strengthening. We must strengthen it across the whole range of our activities.

(*spoke in French*)

At the beginning of the year, in my own millennium report (A/54/2000), I suggested a number of ways to make the Organization a more effective tool, better suited to improving the life of every individual, no matter where. Some of the specific initiatives I set out in that report are already in a pilot phase. They are encouraging examples of innovative partnerships which the United Nations should maintain in the future.

I am gratified that Member States have deemed it useful to use my report as a basis for the draft political declaration that has been referred to the Summit for adoption at its conclusion. I therefore urge you, ladies and gentlemen, not to limit yourselves to declarations of intent, but to consider your declaration as a plan of action, and to ensure that it will be amply followed up.

(*spoke in English*)

We need to decide our priorities. And we must adapt our United Nations, so that in future those priorities are reflected in clear and prompt decisions, leading to real change in people's lives.

That, my friends, is what the peoples expect of us. Let us not disappoint them.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): I would now like to draw the attention of Members to a draft resolution that appears in document A/55/L.2 and that contains the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Draft resolution A/55/L.2 was circulated to delegations this morning and distributed in the Hall.

Before we turn to the list of speakers, and in order to avoid disrupting the speakers, I would like to seek the cooperation of representatives in refraining from expressing congratulations inside the General Assembly Hall after a statement has been delivered. I thank representatives in advance for their cooperation.

I would also like to remind participants that the General Assembly has decided that each speaker will have five minutes to make a statement during the Millennium Summit. In connection with the time limits, a light system has been installed at the speakers' rostrum. The system functions as follows. A green light will be activated at the start of the speaker's statement, an orange light will be activated 30 seconds before the end of the five minutes, and then a red light will be activated when the five-minute limit has elapsed.

May I appeal to all speakers to cooperate in observing the time limit in making their statements so that all those inscribed on the list of speakers for a given meeting will be heard at that meeting. I thank representatives in advance very much for their cooperation.

Addresses on the occasion of the Summit

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States of America.

President Clinton: Let me begin by saying it is a great honour to have this unprecedented gathering of world leaders in the United States. We come together not just at a remarkable moment on the calendar, but at the dawn of a new era in human affairs, when globalization and the revolution in information technology have brought us closer together than ever before. To an extent unimaginable just a few years ago, we reach across geographical and cultural divides. We know what is going on in each other's countries. We share experiences, triumphs, tragedies, aspirations. Our growing interdependence includes the opportunity to explore and reap the benefits of the far frontiers of science and the increasingly interconnected economy. And as the Secretary-General just reminded us, it also includes shared responsibilities: to free humanity from poverty, disease, environmental destruction and war. That responsibility in turn requires us to make sure the United Nations is up to the job.

Fifty-five years ago the United Nations was formed "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Today there are more people in this room with the power to achieve that goal than have ever been gathered in one place. We find today fewer wars between nations, but more wars within them. Such internal conflicts, often driven by ethnic and religious differences, took 5 million lives in the last decade — most of them completely innocent victims.

These conflicts present us with a stark challenge. Are they part of the scourge the United Nations was

established to prevent? If so, we must respect sovereignty and territorial integrity, but still find a way to protect people as well as borders.

The last century taught us that there are times when the international community must take a side — not merely stand between the sides or on the sidelines. We faced such a test — and met it — when Mr. Milosević tried to close the last century with a final chapter of ethnic cleansing and slaughter. We have faced such a test for 10 years in Iraq, where the United Nations has approved a fair blueprint spelling out what must be done. It is consistent with our resolutions and our values, and it must be enforced. We face another test today in Burma, where — in defiance of repeated United Nations resolutions — a brave and popular leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, once again has been confined, with her supporters imprisoned and her country in distress.

But most conflicts and disputes are not so clear-cut. Legitimate grievances and aspirations are piled high on both sides. Here there is no alternative to principled compromise in giving up old grudges in order to get on with life.

Right now, from the Middle East to Burundi to the Congo to South Asia, leaders are facing this kind of choice between confrontation and compromise. Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Barak are with us here today. They have promised to resolve the final differences between them this year, finally completing the Oslo process embodied in the Declaration of Principles signed seven years ago this month at the White House.

To those who have supported the right of Israel to live in security and peace, and to those who have championed the Palestinian cause these many years — let me say to all of you, they need your support now more than ever to take the hard risks for peace. They have the chance to do it, but like all life's chances, it is fleeting and about to pass. There is not a moment to lose.

When leaders do seize this chance for peace we must help them. Increasingly, the United Nations is being called into situations where brave people seek reconciliation but where the enemies of peace seek to undermine it. In East Timor, had the United Nations not engaged, the people would have lost the chance to control their future. Today I was deeply saddened to learn of the brutal murder of three United Nations relief workers there by the militia in West Timor, and I urge the Indonesian authorities to put a stop to these abuses. In Sierra Leone, had the United Nations not engaged, countless children now living would be dead.

But in both cases the United Nations did not have the tools to finish the job. We must provide those tools — peacekeepers that can be rapidly deployed with the right training and equipment; missions well defined and well led and with the necessary civilian police.

We must work as well to prevent conflict; to get more children in school; to relieve more debt in developing countries; to do more to fight malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS, which cause one quarter of all the deaths in the world; to do more to promote prevention and to stimulate the development of and affordable access to drugs and vaccines; and to do more to curb the trade in items that generate money that make conflict more profitable than peace, whether diamonds in Africa or drugs in Colombia.

All these things come with a price tag, and all nations, including the United States, must pay it. The prices must be fairly apportioned, and the United Nations structure of finances must be fairly reformed so that the Organization can do its job. But those in my country or elsewhere who believe we can do without the United Nations, or impose our will upon it, misread history and misunderstand the future.

Let me say to all present that this is the last opportunity I will have as President to address this General Assembly. It is the most august gathering we have ever had because so many of you have come from so far away. If I have learned anything in these last eight years, it is that whether we like it or not, that we are growing more interdependent. We must look for more solutions in which all sides can claim a measure of victory and move away from choices in which someone is required to accept complete defeat. That will require us to develop greater sensitivity to our diverse political, cultural and religious claims, but it will require us to develop even greater respect for our common humanity.

The leaders here assembled can rewrite human history in the new millennium. If we have learned the lessons of the past, we can leave a very different legacy for our children. But we must believe the simple things: that everywhere, in every land, people in every

station matter. Everyone counts, everyone has a role to play, and we all do better when we help each other.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo (*spoke in Spanish*): Never before have the peoples of the earth focused as much attention and expectations on the United Nations as they are doing now, on the occasion of this session, because we are marking, at a time of uncertainty for mankind, what history will record as the Millennium Summit.

Despite the major advances and progress achieved in the development of science and technology, in the resolution of conflicts in various regions of the planet and in the changes made through democracy, respect for human rights and good government, the turn of the century shows us a world that is threatened and in a permanent state of uncertainty about the destiny and survival of mankind.

If we study closely the causes of this degrading situation, we find that to date we have not known how to treat the individual, the bearer of eternal values, the key to and the beneficiary of all development efforts worldwide.

It has also been observed that if the growth and the prosperity of some nations are based on the marginalization and the impoverishment of others, the outcome can only be a world in tension, dominated by injustice and intolerance.

Over recent years and at various meetings of outstanding importance that took place in almost all continents throughout the world — particularly the Mexico World Conference on the rights of women in 1975, the Copenhagen meeting in 1980, the World Summit for Children in 1990 and the recent evaluation of social development in Geneva, we have broadly identified and raised the serious political, economic and social problems that afflict humanity, particularly in the developing countries.

In this light, we appreciate the outcome of the recent G-8 Summit in Okinawa, which recognized need for greater political will and commitment to contribute to relieving the suffering of the peoples of the world.

Indeed, the vast majority of the world's population, and particularly of third world countries, are victims of poverty, economic crisis, debt, great pandemics and endemic diseases, extreme poverty and many natural disasters.

Nonetheless, we note with great concern the clear inadequacy of the present structure of the United Nations to overcome this overwhelming situation, face these serious problems and meet the requirements and the demands of the twenty-first century.

Thus, we advocate that, in order to be coherent and efficient, the United Nations must develop at the same pace and adapt itself to the events of every historical moment. In this regard, if the United Nations does not democratize itself and become universal, in accordance with the principle just mentioned, and heed equally all nations, it will not be likely to carry out justly and equitably its predominant role in facing the threats and challenges of the twenty-first century.

We therefore raise the voice of Equatorial Guinea, joining those clamouring for the urgent and necessary reform and strengthening of the United Nations system at this historic Millennium Summit.

I wish to conclude by congratulating the Secretary-General and sharing the observation in his report that

> "Globalization offers great opportunities, but at present its benefits are very unevenly distributed." (*A/54/2000, para. 13*)

Globalization should be a positive force for the entire world population and should not leave millions of people marginalized by poverty. We must govern better, and we must learn to govern better together. For these two tasks we need effective States and Governments that promote mankind as the bearer of eternal values, the key to and the beneficiary of all our efforts.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera, Constitutional President of the Republic of Guatemala.

President Portillo Cabrera (*spoke in Spanish*): I am very pleased and moved at being able to participate in this historic Millennium Summit, whose significance is due not only to the fact that more than 150 Heads of State and Government are gathered here, but also to the

fact that we have gathered to deal with matters that will impact the daily lives of all the inhabitants of the globe.

To begin, I would like to underline Guatemala's profound identification with the United Nations. We firmly believe in multilateralism, and view the United Nations as its highest exponent.

We have been direct beneficiaries of the activities of the Organization in many areas, and particularly in the establishment of peace. We participate actively in its intergovernmental bodies, and have played a significant role in its organs.

Above all, we believe that the United Nations is destined to play an even more relevant role than ever before in an increasingly transnationalized world. But to do so, it will have to adapt to the needs of the twenty-first century.

What shape will that adaptation take? In my opinion, the report, "We the peoples" (A/54/2000), prepared by the Secretary-General as a basis for our debates, offers valuable guidelinesthat will pose some challenges for our Organization.

I would like to pause for a moment on the matter of priorities. I believe that the Secretary-General was quite right in presenting his triptych of a world in which there is "freedom from want", "freedom from fear" and a "sustainable future".

Eliminating poverty is the great unfinished task of the twentieth century. Development should therefore be at the centre of the concerns of the United Nations, just as it is in our government programme in Guatemala.

But there cannot be development without peace and security. Because we believe in the future, which is more than improving the present situation for all, we in Guatemala have wagered on peace. We have learned much from war: that dialogue is more powerful than arms; that respect is the greatest impediment to confrontation. For four decades all Guatemalans paid, directly or indirectly, the costs of war. We are now all engaged in efforts to pay for the benefits of peace, through an exemplary agreement between the State and civil society regarding a fiscal pact.

Another lesson we have learned from history is that peace is costly, in terms of resources and efforts. It was after a global conflagration that this Assembly of all nations was formed, with the goal of securing and fostering peace.

We shall have to strengthen our collective capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts, both across borders and domestically. Guatemala provides an example of how the United Nations can assist in consolidating peace and respect for human rights, without any improper intrusion into the internal affairs of a nation.

As regards the need to adapt the United Nations to the circumstances that will prevail in the twenty-first century, some essential points can be made. Emphasis should be placed on a sound international legal system, complemented by the principles and practices of multilateralism. The United Nations intergovernmental structure should be adapted to the new international environment. The most obvious starting point for this process is the reform of the Security Council. We must put an end to the doctrinaire practice of freezing the Organization's budget. If we want the United Nations to be a first-class institution, we must learn to provide it with the necessary financial support.

Finally, since Guatemala is a pluricultural, multi-ethnic and plurilingual society, I could not agree more that cultural diversity is an invaluable asset to the international community. The differences between us are our strength, not our weakness. The difference between nations is the wealth of hope for a better future for our planet.

I have sketched our vision of the role of the United Nations for the twenty-first century. In the course of the general debate that will begin in the General Assembly next week, we will elaborate further on this vision and how it is reflected in the efforts we are making domestically. We propose that we respond to this new millennium with ideas, and not beliefs. As the Spanish philosopher María Zambrano stated:

> "When one thinks, one moves forward to the future. Each idea looks to and shapes the future; while beliefs, which are the product of the past, detain us in its backwardness as the future dims."

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): Before proceeding, I would like to inform Members that, on account of unforeseen circumstances, the next speaker will be the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

President Khatami (*spoke in Farsi; English text furnished by the delegation*): At the outset, I wish to express my appreciation, on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/54/2000) on the emerging global challenges in the new century.

Humanity, shattered and anguished by its journey through the twentieth century, marred by blood, calamity and discrimination, is eagerly awaiting a better tomorrow in the new century, a future built around justice and the dignity and rights of human beings.

The structure of power in our contemporary world must be reformed, and this requires submission to democratic rule at the international level.

The right of man to determine his destiny, the emanation of authority, particularly political authority, from the free will and choice of the population, its submission to the continued scrutiny of the people and the institutionalization of such human accountability constitute the major characteristics of democracy, which need to be clearly distinguished from its various manifestations. No particular form of democracy can be prescribed as the only and final model. Let us allow the unfolding endeavours to formulate democracy in the context of spirituality and morality usher in yet another model for democratic life.

Let us strive so that the exigencies of a few power-holders do not supersede the interest of humanity through familiar practices of the endorsement of undemocratic Governments not responsive to the will and needs of their people and the application of double and multiple standards of response to incidents around the globe. Let us submit to democratic principles — not only as the criteria of good governance domestically, but also as the new norm governing interaction in the global society, whose constituents, much like equal individuals within nation States, are nations of equal right and dignity.

The fundamental question is whether the United Nations is capable of revisiting and reconstructing its foundations on the basis of such a vision.

The world needs more openness and the expansion of liberty and inclusive justice. In our global environment, the preservation and expansion of power constitute the dominant discourse and the paradigm of political interaction. This has resulted in political thought and practice neglecting profound philosophical, cultural and religious issues.

"Freedom from want", "freedom from fear" and "a sustainable future", as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General, can only be attained by defining emerging global relations through an open and balanced dialogue.

I proposed to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session the designation, as an initial step, of the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. The object of the dialogue among civilizations is to facilitate a new paradigm of inclusion and reform in global relations and preclude the ascendance of unidirectional relations and political and cultural monologues. Now is the time for a further step.

Globalization, as the most pressing international development, has opened new horizons — albeit affected by the monopolies of power and capital — for human society. Hence, we should strive to augment national capacities and the authority of democratic Governments in order to enhance accountability at the international level. This will require capacity-building for the active and effective participation of all members of the global community, including Governments and the institutions of civil society, in the international decision-making process.

Has the time not come to envisage new responsibilities for the United Nations in the common endeavour to found a participatory global order based on dialogue, tolerance and synergy? In my statement to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, I put forward a proposal by the esteemed leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran for recognition of the equal rights of all nations through the removal of discrimination from United Nations machinery, particularly the Security Council. This proposal is awaiting positive consideration.

Today, in the name of a great nation with a long history and an ancient civilization — which, through its magnificent and spiritual revolution, has opened a new era of governance by the people in the context of religion — I declare before this Assembly that nations can no longer be excluded or marginalized on political, cultural and economic pretexts. The world belongs to all its inhabitants. No double standards, national or

international, can ever be accepted in the contemporary world. Our task today is to transform the logic of international relations, distancing it from the logic of power. At the dawn of the third millennium, the time has come to call upon the world not to yield to the quest for power, but to opt for dialogue and, ultimately, for compassion, love and spirituality.

Let us empower the United Nations to take the lead in this endeavour for the betterment of global governance.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Arnoldo Alemán Lacayo, President of the Republic of Nicaragua.

President Alemán Lacayo (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a unique opportunity and a great honour to participate in this Summit, known as the Millennium Summit, to reflect together on common values, challenges and objectives for the future.

I should like to extend our very special thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who has provided us with a detailed report on the role of the United Nations in the new century on which we have embarked. This document is an invaluable guide and will certainly stimulate the discussions to be held in this forum.

We believe that strengthening the organs and bodies of the United Nations is of great importance if we are to enhance the effectiveness of its role in, inter alia, peacekeeping and international security, combating poverty and activities damaging to the environment and strengthening health and education programmes.

Nicaragua is in full agreement with the proposal in the Secretary-General's report to carry out reform within the Security Council with a view to achieving a more equitable and democratic representation of the various regions, thereby promoting greater balance and representativeness.

In this context, we wish to propose that the final Declaration take into account the need to strengthen the International Court of Justice with the aim of offering States the opportunity to resolve peacefully any disputes that may arise between them. We also believe it is very important to reaffirm our commitment to maintaining and strengthening the universal calling of the United Nations, in order to ensure that all the peoples of the world can be fairly represented, without differentiation or exclusion.

This leads us to reaffirm before this Assembly our belief in the right of the Republic of China — which for more than a half-century has exercised full sovereignty in Taiwan and which has a population of more than 22 million people — to participate in the United Nations as a full Member, having been a signatory to the founding Charter in San Francisco and fully complying with its principles.

Given the realities and challenges facing us in the twenty-first century, we accord priority to the formulation of policies and strategies whose main focus is the well-being and integral development of the human being, through a direct, joint and concerted attack on the scourges of unemployment and poverty, with all their devastating and degrading consequences for the dignity and the future of people.

During the twentieth century, which has just ended, the human race witnessed dazzling and astounding changes and progress in numerous areas of science, technology, culture, communication and informatics. There were also substantial — even radical — transformations in the geopolitical, ideological, trade, financial and many other fields, to say nothing of the vast universe of thought and ideas relating to what is real and what is possible.

Unfortunately, we also lived through horrible tragedies and conflicts, which in many regions took a huge toll on peace, democracy, human rights and freedoms, further aggravating poverty, backwardness, suffering and deprivation and abysmal differences.

This new century will be witness to a striking globalization process, overwhelming and unstoppable, whose forms, levels, impacts and significance could never have been imagined a few years ago. That is why today we have the enormous responsibility of channelling our best efforts, early and effectively, to achieve at least a minimum transfer of science and technology to developing countries.

Nicaragua is making great efforts to consolidate democracy with social justice, to reconstruct the extensive damage recently caused by powerful natural phenomena, heal the wounds of a painful and destructive civil war — which, fortunately, we have emerged from — and lay solid groundwork for a development process characterized by radical

transformation, stability and appropriate levels of governance.

The continuous deterioration in the terms of trade, an ill that has become chronic, to the detriment of countries with less developed economies — mainly producers and exporters of raw materials — coupled with the debilitating impact of oil price increases, has severely hampered efforts to realign and revive our economies.

Compounding this burden and these sacrifices is the unbearable weight of an immense external debt, representing an insurmountable barrier to overcoming poverty and unemployment. In this respect, we are pleased to note the interest recently shown by the developed countries and multilateral financial institutions in seeking alternatives that would substantially relieve the situation of the heavily indebted poor countries. We hope that this interest will soon be reflected in specific and meaningful actions, so that countries such as Nicaragua can break this vicious circle of poverty and look towards a future with greater opportunities and expectations for sustainability and progress.

I should point out that in the report recently submitted by the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council, my country is mentioned as the third in Latin America to have an integrated disaster prevention and mitigation system.

The ideas, proposals and resolutions we adopt today, in this universal forum, will, barring an unforeseen act of fate, largely determine the face of the future we hope to see tomorrow. Although thinking about the future was once the mysterious province of adepts, prophets, poets and fortune-tellers, I am confident that it will be that of statesmen, too, knowing that if we put forth our best efforts, imagination and enthusiasm, we will succeed in making this face of the future kinder and more promising for our peoples and for generations to come.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation.

President Putin (*spoke in Russian*): This Summit is indeed the last one in this millennium, but the Millennium Summit will go down in history not for that reason, but because of its significance. We and our predecessors have done much to provide this symbolic image with a profound meaning. The second half of the century, with its international component, indisputably has taken place under the aegis of the United Nations. The very existence of this Organization was a guarantee of freedom from the arbitrariness of hegemony and diktat.

When the United Nations was established, many of the States represented here were not on the map of the world. However, the norms of international behaviour were then being formed, and they were being taken into account then. Today these norms are accepted by all and are serving the interests of the international community.

The major result is obvious. What half a century ago seemed unattainable has today become the norm of international relations. Respect for each other and for the instruments of the United Nations has helped countries and peoples to learn the art of dialogue and to seek common decisions. Even global confrontation could not impede joint work, even in the most extreme crises and dead-end situations.

All of this, without exaggeration, can be called the "school of the United Nations".

The political term given to leaders is usually not very long. We had the luck to be born and to live during a threshold epoch. We were lucky to have been called upon by our peoples, to be needed by our peoples. That is why it is the natural duty of a politician to see at least one step ahead. We are bound to give a chance to those who will come after us.

The twentieth century will go down in history as a century of contradictions. It has become an epoch of grandiose achievements and horrendous wars, a century of revolutionary breakthroughs and profound disillusionments. However, our countries and peoples have managed to sidestep hatred, have managed to overcome the cold war with its global confrontation. That, of course, is a great achievement of the United Nations.

Preceding generations left us, as our heritage, a unique Organization. The United Nations has learned to resolve and is resolving the most complex of world problems. It is here that the international regime of human rights, the most important feature of today's world, was born. This universal instrument has proved not to be vulnerable to ideological speculation. And the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights has never been merely an empty declaration. Even today, it continues to exert a definite effect on all of our lives.

We are convinced that there is a need to renovate and improve United Nations mechanisms. Such is indeed the imperative of our times. But no reform of any kind should bend its fundamental principles.

The new century of the United Nations must become, and must go down in history as, a period of real disarmament. Today we have already succeeded in creating an efficient mechanism for disarmament. Its foundation includes the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. It includes regimes for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means for their delivery, as well as dozens of the most important agreements on the limitation and reduction of different kinds of armaments.

We must reliably block ways for the spread of nuclear weapons. This can be achieved, inter alia, by excluding the use of enriched uranium and pure plutonium in global atomic energy production. Technically, this is quite possible to implement. But there is something even more important: the incineration of plutonium and other radioactive elements is providing what is required in order to find a final solution to the problem of radioactive residues. It is opening up fundamentally new horizons for secure life on our planet. In this connection, Russia is proposing to work out and put into practice a relevant mechanism, with the participation of the International Atomic Energy Association.

Particularly alarming are plans for the militarization of outer space. In the spring of 2001, we shall be celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the first manned flight to outer space. That man was our compatriot, and we are suggesting that on that date, under the aegis of the United Nations, an international conference on the prevention of the militarization of outer space be organized. If colleagues here agree, that conference could be held in Moscow.

For our country, the end of the twentieth century, and particularly its last decade, has not been merely a transitional period and not even a historic period of time. I think the Assembly will agree that not every people has had to make the kind of choice that was made by Russia. The threats and the challenges that Russia has had to face are shared enemies of free nations, and we consider particularly dangerous and treacherous the phenomenon of terrorism. It is unscrupulous about means and is skilful in changing its masks, but it survives only when it has the chance to undermine the stability of a State and to sow seeds of mutual suspicion and animosity. Our common task is to raise an efficient barrier to this evil.

We must move to peace, stability and prosperity by relying on the entire wealth of cultures and traditions. In the twenty-first century, the right to national self-expression and independence must continue with dignity to supplement already-recognized approaches to the solution of basic problems. Democracy in international relations means first and foremost unswerving compliance with the fundamental norms of international law. It is an awareness of the entire diversity of global civilization, a recognition of and respect for that diversity.

I am convinced that relying on a just world order and strategic stability we will guarantee the sustainable development of civilization. Today's Russia, as never before, is open, responsible and ready for cooperation on an equitable basis of partnership.

I wish all success to our Summit and the efficient implementation of its decisions.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives.

President Gayoom: I have only five minutes, so I shall be brief, to the point. But let me first of all congratulate you, Mr. and Ms. Co-President, on your election to the Chair, and the Secretary-General on his excellent report.

I shall spend the next four minutes and thirty-seven seconds voicing my country's concerns and hopes for the new millennium. The theme of this Millennium Summit is "The role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century". Many people around the globe ask: Fifty-five years after the United Nations was established, has the world become a better place?

The answer, in our view, is a qualified "yes". Decolonization is almost complete. Apartheid has been dismantled. Peace has paved the way for human progress. In many parts of the world, the health status has improved, and so has education. The standard of living is rising. Human rights are more widely respected. Democracy has virtually replaced despotism.

We would rejoice in these achievements were it not for the horror of the failures.

Remember the millions of children dying of hunger. Recall the killing fields of the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Think of the many evil faces of terrorism and the trillions spent on the arms build-up. Never forget the escalating environmental degradation. From genocide to wars to disease, the bodies keep piling up.

So the United Nations is, at best, a modest success.

The new millennium is as opportune a time as any for a fresh start. The gap between expectation and result must be eliminated. War is the ultimate human tragedy. All bloodshed must cease.

The United Nations must become more democratic. It must serve all States alike. The keynote of the United Nations Charter is "We, the peoples". We must bridge the numerous divides that fragment humanity today. We must reject all forms of discrimination and exploitation.

Development must become more inclusive. Poverty is a crime against humanity committed by those who can but do not alleviate it. The expenditure on arms must be diverted to feed hungry mouths and to save children. Democracy, development and peace are different expressions of the same reality.

Globalization must be made a positive force for all. It must unite and not divide, benefit and not deprive. Information technology can unite humanity like never before. The least developed countries need greater preferential treatment. The empowerment of women must become universal. Moral values are vital for a caring world order. Humanity's quest for progress must be sustainable. We have no right to destroy the Earth. Ecological damage must be stopped. Global warming must be curbed. All low-lying countries must be saved.

For all these reasons, a stronger and fairer United Nations is essential.

To those who learn from mistakes, the past is a good guide for the future. But let us not go back 1,000 years; let us go forward to 100 years from now. When the United Nations meets to usher in yet another century, will the Maldives and other low-lying island nations be represented here? This is not only a sobering thought, but an alarming one.

Now, I have only 30 seconds. It would be a pity to disperse from this gathering without making a final commitment to saving the Earth. I do not wish to be cynical, but are we to believe that the world really cares? Are we to believe that all humanity is one? Inaction, too, speaks louder than words.

My time at the podium is up, but I pray that that of my country is not.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia.

President Nujoma: Fifty years ago, the founders of the United Nations agreed to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Through the United Nations, they have kept their promise. In all this, the General Assembly has a central role to play through the authority assigned to it by the Charter of our Organization.

During the last century, the United Nations made considerable efforts to affirm and, indeed, assert the rights of humankind, including the right of nations and peoples to self-determination and independence, the right to development and gender equality. We have made significant progress in our collective endeavour to put a definitive end to the dehumanizing socio-economic systems of colonialism, racism and apartheid tyranny. However, we must still ensure that the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara regain their dignity and enjoy their inalienable right to self-determination.

The new millennium offers us new opportunities to advance the noble beginnings of the last century. The drive to improve humankind's living conditions remains the most serious common challenge. It demands of all of us concerted efforts. During the closing decade of the last century, the United Nations sponsored many important conferences that were held from Rio to Istanbul. At these conferences, we made solemn declarations that underdevelopment and its attendant poverty are an affront to humanity.

The question now is: Do we have the requisite political will, moral courage and appropriate strategy, as we enter the new millennium, to effectively combat poverty, especially in those areas where it is most rampant, amid conspicuous affluence at the scale we have witnessed over the last 50 years? We cannot

celebrate our remarkable achievements in science, technology and other areas of human endeavours while millions of our fellow human beings continue to live in a world of deprivation and even starvation.

Indeed, as we gather here today we are confronted by the sad reality that, for most people in the developing countries, especially in Africa, the benefits of information and communication technology remain to be felt. This glaring disparity between the North and the South is the most burning issue of our time. The United Nations Economic and Social Council and the United Nations agencies have a critical role to play to narrow that disparity. This is the fundamental question that the Millennium Summit is called upon to address.

We all know that without peace there can be no economic growth and development, and that without development there can be no socio-economic security and stability. Yet, even though the Charter of our Organization enjoins us to

> "unite our strength to maintain international peace and security",

there remain a number of political and armed conflicts that continue to take a toll on human lives. Therefore, as we stand at the threshold of the new millennium, the United Nations must make a sober and critical reflection on its capacity and preparedness in maintaining international peace and security. The Member States of the United Nations cannot, and should not, abdicate their responsibility for collective security.

Yesterday I had the privilege, as Chairman of the Southern African Development Community, to address the launching of corporate strategies in the fight against HIV/AIDS in southern Africa. This partnership between the United Nations Development Programme and the United States Corporate Council on Africa aims at developing strategies that will effectively counter the spread of HIV/AIDS in our region, especially at the workplace. I am convinced that this initiative will build a bridge between the global corporate community and African leaders.

On the one hand, success against the spread of HIV/AIDS requires urgent and coordinated efforts by political, corporate and spiritual leaders to stem the spread of this pandemic. At every opportunity of public engagement we, the leaders, must assume the role of champions of raising HIV/AIDS awareness. On the other hand, there is an imperative need for pharmaceutical companies to give those millions of people living with HIV/AIDS access to affordable drugs. For those people that will be a very welcome and highly appreciated promise of extended life.

Let us go from this Summit recharged with a sense of hope and commitment to make the world a better place for all.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein, Head of State of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

King Abdullah II: Today the quest for peace unites us, the opportunities and perils of a new frontier challenge us, and the hopes and prayers of millions around the world for harmony and justice echo to remind us of the historic significance of this Millennium Summit. Today provides a rare opportunity for leaders to appraise the world's present situation and assess its future prospects. It also marks our determination to look forward well beyond the unfulfilled dreams and hopes of peaceful coexistence among peoples, of a fairer distribution of wealth among nations, of the eradication of poverty and disease, and of the protection of our environment.

Despite the genuine efforts of many around the world, especially the United Nations, those goals have yet to be attained. In fact, the successes of the United Nations rarely make headline news. It is the dismal state of affairs that usually does: 30,000 infants dying every day from preventable diseases; 100 million children living on the streets; and 1.2 billion people subsisting on less than a dollar a day. Peace, stability and prosperity still elude many countries at the turn of the century, sacrificing the noble principles of justice, equality and democracy, and widening the digital divide that separates them from the developed world.

Now is the time to declare our commitment to embrace a new vision of an order that seeks justice and protects it, creates opportunity and sustains it, and, most of all, that upholds a universal moral value and defends it. It would form a new code of conduct that prevents conflicts and provides for practical mechanisms of cooperation. It would draw upon lessons of the past and seek to chart a new course in international responsibility, one that responds to the needs of the future. In short, it is a vision that would

enable us to meet what is the biggest challenge of the new millennium: that of securing the human rights and the human development of people around the world.

My father, the late King Hussein, left us a country with noble traditions built on a rich Islamic heritage. Jordan today tells a story of pride, of sacrifice and of achievement. It is indeed turning the vision into reality. Long suffering from the politics of despair, we have drawn lessons from a seemingly endless conflict that has deprived peoples of their rights, their security and their peace of mind. It has denied them the opportunity to excel. We have provided an example in reaching fair agreements that allow for peaceful coexistence among States. Committed to accountable political governance, sound economic management and a free press, we are cementing a democracy that does not simply represent the rule of the majority, but that paves the road to equal opportunities, greater tolerance and the acceptance of differences.

Our sacrifices in United Nations peacekeeping activities in Sierra Leone, East Timor and other areas testify to our commitment to the noble goals of the United Nations. It is in this same spirit that we welcome the recommendations of the Brahimi Panel's comprehensive report on peacekeeping and look forward to their adoption and enforcement.

United Nations resolutions, including resolutions 194 (III), 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), must be implemented if this century is to be safer, fairer and more peaceful than the departing one. Our determination to protect life on Earth will be explicitly stated at the upcoming meeting of the World Conservation Congress and the Earth Forum, which will be convened next month in Amman.

Most importantly, we are pioneering a model where the Jordanian human talent is the true measure of the wealth of our country.

Our Summit today must look forward towards realizing a vision of a tolerant and peaceful humanity that protects life and seeks to improve it for all. In an increasingly smaller village, we must shun conflict and rivalry. We should instead strive to achieve the greater expectations that this day and age entail — those of prosperity, liberty and freedom. Let us reconcile our conflicting values. Let us compete in the search for knowledge. Let us cooperate in the pursuit of excellence. Let us contribute to our humanity through achievement, peace and vision.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Tran Duc Luong, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

President Tran Duc Luong (*spoke in Vietnamese; interpretation furnished by the delegation*): Over the last 100 years, mankind has made great leaps forward to the extraordinary advances of the scientific and technological revolution, especially information technologies, which are bringing about new changes in all aspects of human life. However, what worries us the most, in spite of the common development trend of the modern world, are the many potential and outstanding problems. It is clear that not all countries enjoy all opportunities for development. Injustice continues in the world, the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor, in which developing countries are taking the toll, and suffering the most severe pressures. That is why the aspiration to peace and development has become even more intense. At this historic moment, we believe that the United Nations will give priority to the following issues.

First and foremost, the United Nations should allocate adequate resources to meeting urgent development needs to address the poverty which is threatening the daily life of five-sixths of the world's population, and carry out mutually beneficial cooperation, refrain from imposing unreasonable conditions, develop fair and transparent international economic and financial institutions, reduce debts, raise official development assistance to the 0.7 per cent of GDP to which developed countries have committed; strengthen and consolidate peace and stability, respect national sovereignty, independence, promote disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament; settle conflicts through peaceful means, and reject acts of intervention, embargo, and blockade, which not only threaten world peace and security but also cause untold sufferings to innocent people; reform the United Nations towards greater democratization, transparency and effectiveness to enable this Organization to serve better the common interests of all States, big and small, for the sake of peace and independence, national sovereignty and justice.

In this spirit we express our agreement with the recommendations put forward by the President of the United Nations General Assembly and the Secretary-General on giving priority to poverty alleviation, control and prevention of HIV/AIDS, extending greater

assistance to developing countries in their integration into the global economy. The most important thing is that we need to identify feasible measures to achieve these goals.

I wish to take this opportunity to propose that the United Nations grant further assistance to expand models of effective cooperation between countries of the North and South, and mobilize the assistance of international organizations and developed countries for those cooperation programmes.

At the dawn of the new millennium, the Vietnamese people have just solemnly celebrated the fifty-fifth anniversary of their national day, imbued with the noble thoughts of President Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese people have endured numerous hardships and made untold sacrifices over the last half century to defend independence and freedom. Viet Nam is now well on the path of innovation and advocates economic development in tandem with social equity and progress.

Viet Nam pursues a foreign policy of independence and seeks to befriend all countries in the world. From this august forum, we would like to affirm that Viet Nam has been and will be a constructive and active partner striving for peace, stability, development and prosperity. We would like to propose that we declare the first decade of the twenty-first century the decade of the greatest global efforts towards poverty alleviation. It is our belief that together with the Millennium Declaration, it will meet our aspirations and remind us of our responsibilities to our nations. We hope that this Millennium Summit will meet the expectations of the international community and mark the beginning of a new United Nations.

May I wish the Summit great success.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic of Yemen.

President Saleh (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me pleasure to congratulate the Co-Chairpersons on presiding over this Millennium Summit, at which most world leaders are gathering under the United Nations flag.

I wish to thank Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive report on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century and the entry into the third millennium with all of its aspirations and new challenges.

The convening of this Summit in this remarkable way could not have been achieved without the great changes and transformations that have occurred in international relations in the final years of the twentieth century and after the end of the cold war. Humanity suffered during the cold war from bloody conflicts which were harmful to the freedom and dignity of man, and had a crippling effect on economic resources, increasing poverty for millions of human beings. Relief came when democracy and freedom prevailed and dictatorships collapsed and a new era began, an era of globalization, democracy, and respect for human rights, an era of free and prosperous economies and of partnerships within globalization, in order to achieve cooperation and stability and peace.

Yemen was among the first countries that joined the United Nations when it was established in 1945, and our country in its modern history has kept abreast of all developments at the international level. The last decade of the twentieth century was crucial in order to enter a new era, the era of unity and democracy, freedom of the press, and the participation of women in political life, and respect for human rights.

Now a reflection of the twenty-first century, Yemen is at peace with itself and with its neighbours. Social peace in the country and in the region is the primary objective of Yemen's policy, which focuses on solving the border problems with its neighbours through dialogue, understanding and international arbitration. This is what has been achieved with the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Eritrea and recently with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We look forward to a new age of cooperation in our region, and the world, an age of openness, free markets, freedom of movement of goods and capital as well as of persons.

International efforts must be coordinated to fight terrorism in all its forms and irrespective of its origins. Terrorism is an international phenomenon. However, we should distinguish between the legitimate struggle of peoples for their freedom and independence, since many peoples do not enjoy freedom and independence, such as the people of Palestine, who continue to suffer under Israeli occupation and despite the universal support for their legitimate cause. Just and comprehensive peace in our region is peace for all, and that cannot be achieved without complete Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories which were occupied in 1967 in the Syrian Golan and Palestine, and the recognition of the legitimate rights of the

Palestinian people, especially the right to establish its independent State on its land with Al-Quds al-Sharif (Jerusalem) as its capital according to the United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and resolution 338 (1973). We must emphasize that the region of the Middle East must be free from weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. While we respect the resolutions of international legitimacy, we call for putting an end to the disastrous situation of the Iraqi people and the need to expedite the lifting of the sanctions imposed on Iraq for over 10 years. Those sanctions are now unwarranted.

This is a historic occasion, on which we call upon all great and rich Powers to play a positive role with a view to accelerating the pace of development in the poor developing countries, to forgive their debts and to prepare them for globalization in a way that would lighten their burdens. This would enhance opportunities to achieve peace and stability worldwide.

Peace and development are intertwined; together, they are a sine qua non of contemporary human and cultural progress. Here, the United Nations has a crucial role to play in rationalizing globalization to ensure that its benefits are not limited to rich countries and that peace and security are not enjoyed only by some countries but rather by all. This great international Organization should spread its wings of peace over all countries and all peoples.

Changes should be made in a number of United Nations organs. In that connection, the Security Council should be reformed to make it more democratic, transparent, independent and balanced to ensure that it represents all mankind.

The Millennium Summit is taking place at a historic moment when the world is entering a new era, with an interchange of benefits, and with partnerships in the service of world peace and humanity. We have high hopes for the outcome of the Summit in terms of world progress and of peace, security and stability throughout the world.

We reiterate our gratitude for the historic opportunity that has been provided us all.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic.

President Chirac (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to join the rest of the Assembly in paying tribute, at the request of the Secretary-General, to the United Nations staff members who were murdered in West Timor.

Time has changed its rhythm. A new world has emerged in the space of a single generation, a world that still bears the scars of the past and where, unfortunately, crises and conflicts still persist. But it is a world that is already in the future. It is an open world in which borders are slowly disappearing, a world steeped in the new global culture of communication technologies, a world rich in promise and breathtaking progress, but, unfortunately, a world that is also creating new forms of exclusion.

The world that is taking shape before our eyes needs common rules, principles and ambitions. That is why the time is right for this Summit. We must together build a new international society that is more civilized, more caring, more just and better managed. The United Nations is the natural place to undertake this task. We must breathe life into an ethic for the twenty-first century, an ethic formed to serve mankind, human dignity and human rights. This ethical struggle is above all a struggle for peace and democracy.

It is a struggle for peace, because peace is our peoples' most precious possession: peace that needs to be strengthened unceasingly through greater efforts to achieve non-proliferation and disarmament, with universal ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and new negotiations on biological weapons, ballistic weapons and small arms; peace that calls for reform of the United Nations as a peacekeeping body, notably by enlarging both categories of Security Council membership. France is committed to this critical reform.

It is a struggle for democracy, because democracy alone ensures respect for human rights and human dignity, because it is the surest path to stability, development and progress for all and because it is also the surest way to guarantee peace.

This ethical struggle is everybody's task: Governments as well as associations, businesses and the media, which are the new players carving out a place for themselves on the international scene. Our globalized world needs bodies that work together to manage it better and to advance these ideals.

This begins with solidarity. The wealth generated by globalization must lead to greater solidarity. Eradicating hunger, poverty and illness must remain a priority among priorities. We have the means. We need the will and the courage to use them, in keeping with our joint commitments.

Then there is the struggle for a better environment and for the preservation our planet's riches. We need coordinated policies to preserve the diversity of cultures and languages, which are the foundations of our peoples' identities. We need the will to act ceaselessly to fight insecurity, in particular by tackling all cross-border scourges: terrorism, organized crime and drug-trafficking. We need the will also to fight major pandemics effectively, particularly HIV/AIDS.

These are all critical issues for the inhabitants of our planet, and we can only make progress on them together, in a spirit of shared responsibility.

Our world, which is still buffeted by political, economic and financial crises, is not suffering from a surfeit of rules, but from the difficulty of keeping international law and practices abreast of change and progress. If we are to build a world order that meets the needs of our times, we must strengthen and improve the coexistence of great institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and, of course, first and foremost, the United Nations.

We all know that the United Nations plays a major role. In its first half-century of existence, this universal, democratic institution has become irreplaceable. We must enable it to adapt to today's world by modernizing the methods of the General Assembly, which, in a sense, is the world's parliament; by firmly supporting the reforms undertaken courageously and effectively by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whom I would like to salute here; by making the best use of the information revolution; and finally, by providing the necessary resources — as indeed the European Union countries are doing, supplying more than one third of the budget and half of the financing for United Nations funds and programmes. This will enable the United Nations to fulfil its duties and to exert a positive influence on the course of world history.

For its part, the European Union, which is a leading player in the world economy and multilateral institutions, is determined to better shoulder its responsibilities in the cause of peace. It has devoted the necessary resources to this cause, because by fulfilling its role, it helps to bring about a more diverse, more balanced, more caring and, above all, more peaceful world.

Globalization, a new stage in humankind's adventure, challenges us to reinvent political action on a worldwide scale — political action inspired by intelligence, courage and our hearts. Our peoples expect much of us. I hope that this Millennium Summit will make possible further progress on the road to peace, freedom, solidarity, security and development.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya.

President Moi: It is a great privilege for me to address this Millennium Summit on behalf of Kenya.

I congratulate the Secretary-General on the meticulous way in which he has prepared for this historic meeting. The regional hearings, in which all our countries participated, put forward an impressive list of ideas, suggestions and objectives — particularly on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

In our own region, Africa, the issues of peace and security and the challenges of development have tended to predominate. We are confident that the process the Secretary-General initiated will allow Africa's voice to be heard with greater clarity, and I hope with greater urgency.

The first few months of the new millennium have not been kind to Africa. We have suffered from severe and extreme weather conditions. In my own country, Kenya, we have had to face the worst drought since our independence. Our continent is faced with other disasters, but these tend to be man-made. I refer to the civil wars and endless conflicts that destroy at a stroke years of painstaking development. In certain cases these wars have lasted literally for generations. They spill across our borders, bringing weapons of war, instability and increasing crime into peaceful countries. They bring thousands of refugees that we cannot afford to look after. These conflicts also make a mockery of

all attempts to reduce poverty — the greatest challenge faced by our continent.

We need urgently to address the growing and dangerous pessimism. We need to challenge the voices of despair. We need to counter those so-called commentators who so often ignore the sheer size of our continent and conveniently forget that we are divided up into 54 sovereign States, each with its own culture, customs and systems of government. Perhaps they also need reminding that our borders were created artificially by the colonial Powers, without regard to the wishes of our people. This is, of course, a major cause of conflict today.

At such a historic meeting as this we must look forward. We must find solutions to these endless futile wars. It is a matter of pride to us in Kenya that we have never failed to react to requests from the United Nations to provide soldiers for United Nations peacekeeping missions. Our pride is tempered with sadness, because in recent months several Kenyan soldiers serving under the umbrella of the United Nations have given their lives to the cause of peace in Sierra Leone.

We now firmly believe that greater resources must be mobilized by the United Nations for conflict prevention and resolution. It is not enough to react to conflict. We must throw our energies into anticipating and preventing conflicts. I know that this is close to the heart of the Secretary-General. Kenya stands ready, based on our own considerable experience in mediation efforts in our region, to play its full part in this regard. And if we are asked to provide peacekeepers again, I trust they will be given a clear and robust mandate, so that they can do their work effectively.

At this Millennium Summit I declare our confidence and faith in the future of Africa. I hope the other Members share this confidence. Our people — our greatest resource — deserve no less. We will move forward together.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Carlos Roberto Flores Facussé, Constitutional President of the Republic of Honduras.

President Flores Facussé (*spoke in Spanish*): Today, just a few moments ago, I took pride in handing the Secretary-General a golden book of peace containing the signatures of hundreds of my compatriots. With this book, Honduras and its people wish to express, in their own handwriting, their sincere desire for peace and friendship among all the peoples of the Earth.

We are here to affirm our commitment to a culture of peace, prepared to vigorously contribute, as is appropriate when one is committed, to this noble campaign that is uniting us at this hopeful and jubilant dawn of the new millennium.

This golden book of peace, which is symbolic and original, was taken by the loving hands of young boys and girls to various cities, villages and hamlets of Honduras for people to sign so that the world and history would see the reflection of the most representative sectors of our nation. From these pure white pages come our ethnic indigenous roots, races of historical tradition, the heirs of our Mayan grandfathers and our other native ancestors. Along with their names comes their pain, accumulated from years of indifference, their aspirations shared with their brothers of this and other continents, but above all their prayers and their legitimate hope to live in a more just and promising and less exclusive world.

It has been signed by our women and men of the villages and cities as testimony to their untiring struggles against discrimination and marginalization, and on behalf of all of us, as acknowledgement of the efforts of the United Nations to foster gender equity and the survival of the human species in a climate of equality, security and trust.

It has been signed by boys, girls, by male and female adolescents, as a token of their dreams and tender utopias, firm in the belief that in our greatest endeavours their rights to education, personal safety and dignity, their guarantees against abuse and exploitation and in favour of a loving, friendlier and less violent society will be a priority. It has also been signed by our elders in the conviction that we should respond to them for each minute they so affectionately protected us.

The signatures in this book, more than the expression of our wants, fears, complaints or claims is the manifestation of our faith in what peace can and must be. Much will depend on the success we achieve in vanquishing hunger, poverty, malnutrition, ignorance, marginalization, exclusion and prejudice. Peace is the honest effort to shorten the distance between those who have the least and those who have

the most, to reduce the chasm of heinous inequalities and contrasts that separate people and countries and to raise social and economic justice among peoples and nations to the level of universal demand. More than a world pained by poverty and inequity for the overwhelming majority, the world should be the sum of its peoples with at least their basic needs and essential requirements met.

It is not a matter of altruism, nor philanthropy, nor mercy. This is about saving the peace and harmony of humanity, carrying peace and harmony to every corner of the planet.

The golden book of peace, with which Honduras salutes the United Nations, holds our greatest aspirations. But for others these aspirations should not be alien or different. Yet, should they be so, peace is also the tolerance to coexist with differences; tolerance that allows persons and nations of different religions, colours and creeds to coexist in peace.

God bless all nations. May God guide us all.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ricardo Lagos Escobar, President of the Republic of Chile.

President Lagos Escobar (*spoke in Spanish*): I come from Chile, from the extreme southern part of the Americas, from a place that has been called the end of the earth. Because we come from a country that is separated from the rest of the world by extreme geography, we enthusiastically and optimistically view globalization, which makes us all part of shared time and space. We know that this is a revolution that impacts the economy, technology, politics, culture and daily life of people everywhere on the planet.

We in the southern part of the world are not afraid of this transformation. We embrace it full of hope. In a little over 10 years, in my country we have managed to double the size of our economy, drastically reduce poverty, strengthen our democracy and create a culture of respect for human rights. Our case confirms that globalization is a source of opportunity for the peoples of the world, even for the smallest countries removed from the international flows, such as is our case.

Globalization carries responsibilities with it, and Chile has assumed these without hesitation. We have committed ourselves to disarmament policies, United Nations peacekeeping efforts, the International Criminal Court and regional and universal instruments for the defence of human rights and democracy. Chile has been and will continue to be present at all these forums and on all these fronts.

However, just as globalization is a source of opportunity, it can also give rise to glaring inequities and grave risks. The financial crisis of the past few years revealed the vulnerability of our economies, as small nations in the face of events that we do not initiate and over which we have no control. We have also seen how local cultures and environments are being destroyed in the name of globalization. Situations of violence, human rights abuses and war also arise which the international community does not know how to prevent or approach. We note with dismay how the gap between the haves and have-nots continues to grow to an extent which is perhaps the gravest threat to the new emerging global society.

There can be no global society in which some advance and others are left behind. All of this compels us to reflect on the course globalization is taking and adopt the necessary measures to guide that course. We believe that the ways in which our countries participate in globalization will determine the outcome for each. There is a great responsibility for our peoples and Governments. On the other hand, as we should not experience injustices alone or in silence, we also cannot blame others for what we ourselves fail to do in our countries.

Accepting globalization, however, does not mean accepting anarchy or the law of the jungle, and thereby renouncing the capacity of humans to govern the world in which we live. Globalization will not have a human face if we do not establish global norms and institutions capable of regulating globalization at all its levels: financial, technological, legal, environmental and trade. No automatic mechanism will reduce inequalities, instability and crises that come with globalization. What is needed is the political will. Permit me to state here that this political will can come only from the States gathered here. May I add also that this will must be based on a people-centred approach in which people are always at the core of our considerations.

There is another element that I must add, because I come from a small country that has always been on the periphery of global power. The elaboration of norms and institutions cannot be the preserve of a

small and exclusive group of nations, with other countries being relegated to the sidelines. The norms that govern us today emerged 45 years ago in Bretton Woods. Today, our people wish to be citizens of the global world, not just spectators.

Civil society will demand an increasingly important role in the globalized world, and that is why in Chile we consulted with civil society while preparing for this Millennium Summit. We are seeking to create spaces in which we can participate and redefine the world that is emerging with the new millennium.

The United Nations is undoubtedly the best forum in which to voice this fundamental concern and to undertake this task. As the depository of the hopes of mankind, it must fulfil this moral duty. To this end, the United Nations must be strengthened, based on its Charter, its history and accomplishments, its resolutions and the commendable work of the Secretary-General. Chile's support for the work of the United Nations, of which we are proud, will remain resolute.

This is the message that, on behalf of Chile, a distant and small country, but one with a proud and decent people who do not fear the challenges that face them and who have succeeded in restoring, despite difficulties, their democratic tradition and finding the path to prosperity — this is the message that I have come to offer to this Summit of the millennium of hope.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Leo Falcam, President of the Federated States of Micronesia.

President Falcam: Today I am compelled to express more briefly than usual my congratulations and respect to the Presidents of the fifty-fourth and the fifty-fifth sessions of the General Assembly. Please be assured that I do so only in the light of the shortness of time allotted for me to address this historic Assembly. I also thank the Secretary-General for his inspiration and energetic leadership, along with that of President Sam Nujoma of Namibia, in organizing this Summit. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate The Honourable Ionatana Ionatana, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, and the people of Tuvalu on their nation's admission yesterday as a new Member of this body.

In recent years, this Organization has had several occasions to celebrate historic milestones and to consider the future of our global community. Nevertheless, surely a 1,000-year milestone provides a unique opportunity to focus on this Organization and each of our roles in it — an opportunity that deserves our most thoughtful attention.

My small island nation, situated in the western Pacific region, has a particular interest in the advent of the new millennium. While our people, traditions and cultures existed on more than 600 of our islands throughout the last millennium, it was only in its closing moments that we secured our constitutional union and emerged into nationhood. Thus, at the dawn of this new millennium, for the first time in history, we proudly look beyond our borders to take our place in the world and in this community of nations.

It is well that the overall theme of this Summit focuses on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, rather than on the entire new millennium ahead. For it is the behaviour of humankind within the next 100 years, rather than the next 1,000, that will determine our future on this planet. Despite the efforts of the past 1,000 years, we still find ourselves today in a world where a fortunate few enjoy most of the blessings of the earth's resources and the fruits of modern development. At the dawn of this new millennium we find much excitement over the rich promise of globalization. But for more than half of the people of the world, who remain in need and who live under the constant threat of devastating diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, it remains open to serious question whether globalization holds any real promise of release from the cycle of poverty. In fact, there are strong suspicions that globalization could widen the gap between developed and underdeveloped nations.

We appeal to the United Nations — if human security is to be achieved and the gap between the developed and underdeveloped nations is to be minimized — for the application of new and more relevant mechanisms for evaluating social and developmental needs, such as the vulnerability index.

Within the last several hundred years, the onset of industrialization and technological advance has created a multinational appetite for luxury and consumption that seems unquenchable. But compelling scientific evidence tells us that this headlong pursuit, if not

moderated within the twenty-first century, threatens the lives of all our descendants and the very inhabitability of the planet that we so recklessly continue to abuse. In my small island nation, for example, we are growing increasingly alarmed over the glacial progress of the world community towards taking even minimal first steps to control the indisputable threats posed by human-induced global warming and its consequent sea level rise.

So it is clear that the United Nations already has a full and compelling agenda for the coming century. Up to this point, I venture to say that, in its work, the United Nations has placed issues of military security at the top of its priorities. But the world is still dangerously unsettled today, and the United Nations efforts in peacemaking and peacekeeping have had mixed success at best. The time has come to recognize that other components of the United Nations agenda, such as sustainable economic development, poverty eradication, social development, good governance and human rights, are as central to the achievement of long-term security as controlling military aggression when it arises.

All the nations of the world, developed and developing, must approach these crucial problem areas with far greater commitment to timely progress than exists today if, during the twenty-first century, the world is to be made a more secure place for all peoples. If, by the end of this century, we are still warring amongst ourselves, it will mean more than just that this body has failed its purpose. It will mean that we have failed with regard to our deepest responsibility to redress the inequitable imbalances within our global society.

I am well aware that I am saying nothing new here. Appeals for new commitment and political will have been made for years, and thus far, the response has been, "Not yet". If it is naïve to hope that concrete actions might flow during this century from the words expressed at this Summit, then the prospect of a viable future for humankind during succeeding centuries is surely in question. I choose to take encouragement from the emergence of great processes sponsored by the United Nations during the last decade, including the Agenda for Development, environmental programmes, the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Biodiversity Convention, and summits held on human rights and social development, to name only a few. All of these, however, must acquire a sense of urgency that is not now present, if the United Nations is to remain truly our best hope for the future.

The Secretary-General surely put it well in describing our opportunity here as one for a moral recommitment to the purposes and principles laid down in the Charter. Nothing less is required if we are to achieve the new political momentum of which he spoke for the international cooperation and solidarity that the peoples of the world increasingly demand. With respect, I would go further and say that a moral recommitment must include determination to act with unaccustomed speed across the entire spectrum of this body's agenda. Only with such determination can the new century indeed become the century of globalization in the best meaning of that term — a century that would mark a great turning point, at the end of which all nations could say, "we did our part to secure the future".

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Boris Trajkovski, President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

President Trajkovski: We are at the dawn of the twenty-first century — a century that holds much promise and hope for all of humanity, but also many challenges. Some of these challenges are old: poverty, war, tyranny and disease have always been against us. At the same time, some of these challenges are rather new, such as globalization and the protection of our environment. We ought to create level playing fields in order for the benefits of globalization to be accessible to all nations and individuals. Fair access to financial resources, knowledge and technology will give everyone the chance to benefit. At the same time, now, more than ever before, we must cooperate to protect our global environment.

What we do here and now will be recorded in history. In this millennium, when countries and peoples are being rapidly brought together by globalization, the United Nations has the responsibility to promote efficient world integration. The Republic of Macedonia takes great pride in its role and contribution to the successful realization of the United Nations mission.

What can a State the size of the Republic of Macedonia do to support the United Nations in the new millennium as boldly described in the report entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000)?

First, the Republic of Macedonia will continue to preserve its dignity, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Secondly, we pledge to continue strengthening our democracy. We will not permit authoritarian leaders to strangle democracy by fanning the flames of nationalism and hindering political and economic reforms. We must continue to develop a strong civil society that is the basis for prosperity.

Thirdly, the Republic of Macedonia pledges to continue to fight for human rights. We proved our commitment to this noble cause by sheltering 360,000 refugees during the Kosovo crisis. Only strong democratic States, which assure all members of minorities that they are equal citizens, can achieve full integration within their societies. Fourthly, we pledge to continue to fight trafficking in weapons, women and drugs. Fifthly, the Republic of Macedonia is committed to reforms that further a market economy, thus providing a higher living standard for everyone.

Our most important contribution to the United Nations has been our continued support for conflict prevention measures since 1993, when the first-ever preventive force was deployed in my country. Later on, we cooperated closely with the United Nations agencies involved in the Kosovo crisis. In addition, the Republic of Macedonia has always supported United Nations sanctions. Even though they have hurt us in the past, they were justified by the long-term stability that they are now providing.

Finally, Macedonia pledges to be a positive force in rebuilding and uniting south-eastern Europe. This task will require fostering law and order, creating strong democracies, rebuilding infrastructure, encouraging free trade and strengthening economies. Ultimately, our goal is simple: to join the Euro-Atlantic structures and take our rightful place in Europe.

I welcome the Secretary-General's endeavour to meet today's challenges, and at the same time I make an appeal to all Members to support these goals. In addition to a united effort by all States, reforming the United Nations will require strengthening countries from within, as well as through more active mutual cooperation among countries. Reforming the United Nations will also require sharing common rules and values, and it will have to include non-governmental organizations, the private sector and multilateral agencies.

In conclusion, I would like to quote the second United Nations Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, who said: "no life is more satisfactory than one of selfless service to your country — or humanity. This service requires a sacrifice of all personal interests, but likewise the courage to stand up unflinchingly for your convictions."

With Hammarskjöld's definition of service, let us defeat the HIV virus, build digital bridges, strengthen international law and defend our ecosystem. None of this will be accomplished in the near future; nor will we achieve all of it in our lifetimes. But let us begin.

My fellow Presidents, the Secretary-General has called us to action. Let us take up the new and old challenges for the betterment of the people we serve, not because it is politically beneficial but because it is the right thing to do.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo, President of the Republic of Guyana.

President Jagdeo: This Millennium Summit has raised the expectations of the world's peoples that out of it will come renewed commitment and determined action on the part of the United Nations Organization, to secure for them a future of global peace and development. I bring to this forum the aspirations of my people for a better life in the hope that they will be speedily satisfied.

In this regard, i offer to Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, our sincere appreciation for the very thoughtful and incisive report which he has laid before us at this meeting.

Without anticipating the conclusions of the interactive dialogue over the next few days, I believe that there is one compelling lesson that can be drawn even now — and that is, if humankind is to live in freedom from fear and want, it must be of one mind and purpose. If nothing else our shared experience has taught us that it is no longer possible to live in isolation. Indeed, if we are to survive as a civilization and even as a species, we must come to learn the virtues of interdependence and international cooperation. Survival will not necessarily be of the fittest, but will depend rather on the sturdiness and steadfastness of the general will. It will depend also on our ability to create a new global human order in which

every man, woman and child is allowed an opportunity to enjoy a decent standard of living. Ultimately, it will depend on whether or not, we as leaders both in the North and South, are prepared to subscribe to and uphold values and principles such as democratic governance, respect for human rights and international law, justice and equality.

As a newly restored democracy, my own Government has placed people at the centre of development. We have sought to involve them fully in the process of decision-making. We have reached out to the private sector and civil society as a whole so that they can become not only beneficiaries of development but also contributors. Persuaded of the need for national capacity-building, my Government continues to devote an increasing percentage of our national budget to the improvement of the social sector, particularly in such vital areas as health, housing, education and training.

However, our efforts remain limited by scarce development financing. Although alleviated by the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and other related arrangements, our debt burden, the servicing of which accounts for more than 50 per cent of government revenue, remains a serious impediment to progress. There is an urgent need for deeper and wider relief to allow small countries such as ours to compete in the global marketplace.

As I stated at the South Summit, which was held earlier this year in Havana, only a fundamental reform of the international economic and financial system can satisfy these needs. The prevailing model of development by which countries implement sound internal policies but fail to progress because of external factors is disastrous. It must be replaced by another paradigm that allows developing countries to participate in the global economy while protecting them from its volatility. Moreover, the success of the model should not be measured by standard economic indicators but by its ability to reduce poverty and empower people.

As we search for this new model we cannot be blind to breaches of international peace and stability which render development difficult if not impossible. The threat or the use of force to resolve disputes — whether inter-State or intra-State — militates against national economic and social progress and must therefore be condemned. The international community must deal swiftly and condignly with such conflicts and demand from all States full respect for the United Nations Charter and the rules and principles of international law. An expanded and more democratic Security Council could, in my view, serve to preserve global security.

On my return to Guyana, my people will be sure to ask of me — What good has this Summit brought us? Will it serve to reduce poverty and create jobs for our young people and social security for our old? Will it help our country to bridge the development and digital divides which now deny us the possibility of full and productive participation in the global economy? I would like to be able to respond positively to these concerns and to assure them that the new millennium will bring them both peace and prosperity.

I know, however, that the hopes and promises of this event will only be realized if there is strong and shared determination by all States to create a new vision and strategy to achieve international sustainable development. I invite my colleague Heads of State and Government to join this enterprise to build a brave new world for this and all generations to come.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zemin, President of the People's Republic of China.

President Jiang Zemin (*spoke in Chinese*): In the outgoing millennium and the twentieth century, mankind has undergone calamities and holocausts and carried out great struggles and creative undertakings. In the twenty-first century and the new millennium, mankind will inevitably come across unexpected tests and challenges and will surely realize new and earthshaking historical changes and a great leap forward.

The cold war is over. The international situation is on the whole moving towards relaxation. The trends towards multi-polarization and economic globalization are gaining momentum. Science and technology are advancing by leaps and bounds. All this offers mankind a rare opportunity for development. The pursuit of peace and development is the theme of our times and represents the common aspirations of people throughout the world. But the unfair and irrational old international political and economic order has yet to be replaced. There is still a long way to go before the two strategic issues of peace and development are resolved,

and a fair and equitable new international political and economic order is established.

The people of many countries are still suffering from the scourge of wars and turmoil. Hegemonism and power politics still exist. Local conflicts keep cropping up. Separatist, terrorist and extremist forces of various kinds are bringing incessant damage to the international community. The environment, drugs, refugees and other global issues are more acutely felt. Many developing countries are still confronted with many difficulties in their economic development. The gap between the North and the South and the gulf between the rich and the poor are widening. Not all countries have become beneficiaries of the progress of modern science and technology and economic globalization. The imbalance in world development is worsening. The planet where we live is still far from stable and tranquil.

Both history and the realities tell us that countries would not be able to live in harmony unless they follow the five principles of peaceful coexistence and strictly comply with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. To build a common security for all is the prerequisite to the prevention of conflicts and wars.

The cold-war mentality must be abandoned once and for all and a new security concept based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation should be established. All international disputes and regional conflicts should be resolved by peaceful means. The promotion of a multipolar international configuration is required by the progress of our times and is in the interests of the peoples of all countries. It would also contribute to world peace and security.

In order to support and promote the development of the developing countries and to alleviate and eradicate poverty, it is essential fully to respect the right of peoples of all countries independently to choose their own social systems and paths of development. North-South dialogue should be enhanced on the basis of equality, while South-South cooperation should also be pursued extensively. The international community should help developing countries to foster and strengthen their capacity for self-development, to which they must accord high priority, and provide them with more help and assistance in terms of technology, financial and human resources and managerial expertise. The debts of the developing countries should be reduced or cancelled and official assistance to them increased, without any conditions attached, so that they may share the fruits of economic globalization and scientific and technological progress alongside the developed countries. The principle of democracy must be advocated and implemented in the conduct of world affairs, both to maintain world peace and to promote common development.

All countries are equal members of the international community and have the right to participate in and direct world affairs. Ours is a world of diversity. Each and every country and nation has made its contribution to the advancement of human civilization. We should promote exchanges between different civilizations in a spirit of equality and democracy and encourage them to learn from one another in order to attain common progress.

Today, the world's destiny should be in the hands of the peoples of all countries. In this new century, the United Nations will shoulder a more arduous task. It should be a place where all its Member States conduct international affairs through consultations and democratic means. No country or bloc of countries should use it when they need it, only to abandon it when they do not. The United Nations and its Security Council should follow the trend of history by introducing reforms, as necessary and appropriate, under the principle of equitable geographical distribution so as to give expression to the will of all their Member States, particularly the developing countries.

China has always adhered to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and supported the Organization in its important role of safeguarding world peace and international security and addressing global issues. China will always fulfil its duties and obligations. Chinese civilization is among the most ancient of the world. It has added to the splendours of human civilization. China's development is a contribution to world peace and development. The Chinese people love peace and strive tirelessly to safeguard world peace and stability. China will never seek hegemony. This is a solemn commitment of the Chinese people to the world.

I am convinced that, in spite of the difficulties and potential vagaries of the evolution of the world situation and the development of human society, this

world of ours will eventually attain a civilization of a higher order and make progress in all areas. It is my hope that all countries and peoples that love peace and long for progress will work hand in hand and impel history towards a bright future.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud, Acting Head of Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Crown Prince Abdullah (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): In the name of my brother, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz, I greet all present here with our Islamic salutation and with the hope and prayer that this historic Summit will meet the aspirations of the six billion people inhabiting our planet.

My country prides itself on being one of the founding Members of this esteemed Organization. My country prides itself also on having been an active and effective Member of the United Nations since its inception. My country further reaffirms its firm confidence that the United Nations remains humanity's greatest hope, after God, for saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, despite the obstacles it faces in some instances and the shortcomings in its performance in others.

This Summit is devoted to reviewing the past and present role of the United Nations. It is a sign of our maturity and awareness that we reassess how much has been achieved and how much remains to be accomplished on the road ahead.

In this regard, please allow me to be frank and sincere as I address this issue and ask: How far are we from attaining the noble objectives that were the *raisons d'être* for the establishment of the United Nations and remain so for its existence? How close are we to achieving the peace that the United Nations was created to establish and maintain?

In this context, I would refer to the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council of 20 July this year, according to which the international community has been unable to establish world peace and security despite the United Nations efforts to achieve the goals enshrined in the Charter.

I agree with the statement made by the Secretary-General in his report submitted to the Security Council on 19 October 1999, to the effect that conflict prevention is more effective and less costly than peacekeeping. As the saying goes in Arabic and, I am sure, in other languages as well, "prevention is more effective than cure".

I am therefore pleased to declare the intention of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to contribute 30 per cent of the proposed budget of the Trust Fund for Preventive Action founded on the gracious initiative of the Secretary-General in order to seek ways to prevent conflict. It is my sincere hope that the efforts of the Fund will lead to the fulfilment of its objectives.

The Charter urges the practice of tolerance and coexistence as good neighbours, and I ask: How far are we from achieving these objectives? Tolerance cannot go hand in hand with aggression and occupation. There has been an ongoing conflict over the past 50 years, exemplified in the desire of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate rights and to assure the return of the holy places in Al-Quds Al-Sharif to Palestinian sovereignty, which has been infringed upon and continues to be violated. This conflict began as a result of a decision by the United Nations, and it continues because of the failure to implement the resolutions of the Security Council.

We further ask: how close are we to achieving the goals of the Charter with regard to safeguarding fundamental human rights in order to preserve the dignity and worth of man, when we realize that 3 billion people — close to half of the human race — still live on $2 or less per day? There are 1 billion illiterate human beings, and a similar number who are totally or partially unemployed.

Human rights, as we Muslims understand the concept, constitute an inalienable gift from God the Creator. No one has the right to deny those rights to anyone else. It is certainly not a certificate of good behaviour to be granted to some by those who claim a false moral superiority over others. These rights and principles exist at the root of all human cultures and must not be viewed in isolation from their origins. Moreover, it is futile to impose on an individual or on a particular society so-called concepts that are contrary to its morals, beliefs and precepts.

The United Nations has decided to declare the year 2001 as the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. I welcome this timely decision and hope that the relevant organs and agencies of the United Nations will

devote part of their time and effort to researching and identifying the contributions made by every culture to the concept of human rights. I hope that they will devote similar time and effort to looking for ways and means to reconcile the universality of the concept of human rights with beliefs and precepts held sacred, fundamental and inalienable by different cultures.

There is consensus among academics and researchers that we are entering a new era in the history of mankind that is commonly known as globalization. This phenomenon carries the promise of the disappearance of barriers, the elimination of boundaries and the emergence of freedom of movement on an unprecedented scale. Globalization promises to bring with it opportunities that can enrich the common bonds of civilization and enhance links between human beings.

Along with this bright promise of globalization there is also a dark side that we can ill afford to ignore and which threatens the poorest and smallest societies of our international community in particular. Many societies fear the loss of their distinctive identities in the face of the so-called electronic invasion. There are also many societies that will face the danger of total bankruptcy when their weak economies enter into competition with stronger and more solid ones. As a result, if left unchecked this dark side of globalization threatens to eclipse the brightness of the great hopes attached to it and turn it into an old conflict with a new name where the strong devour the weak and where healthy, positive diversity is totally suppressed by suffocating uniformity.

We praise the efforts of the various agencies of the United Nations, which played an important role in the birth of globalization. This development was accompanied by international efforts to liberate trade and restore market forces in place of State-directed economies. Efforts were also made to ensure the free flow of ideas and information.

These trends, and the efforts exerted by the United Nations to remove barriers, are welcome developments. But we must remind the United Nations of its historical responsibility to regulate this tide, lest it turn into a flood. At a time when international efforts towards globalization are gaining momentum to reduce differences and institute a measure of commonality among nations, we perceive that this momentum, in its present form and in the absence of regulatory measures, has caused disruption in many societies — not only in developing countries, but also in the developed world. We therefore call upon the United Nations to play the role of guardian and regulator of globalization to assure that it will not turn into a sweeping, overwhelming flood that precipitates the disintegration of the fabric that binds the social order in world communities and thereby threatens their security and stability.

I hope that my analysis does not convey an air of pessimism. My interest is to urge the international community to bear an optimistic responsibility that finds in such challenges an incentive to confront them with concrete action.

The agenda of this meeting includes over 20 proposals aimed at improving the performance of the United Nations, and I have no doubt that the Assembly's adoption of some of these proposals will bring us at least one step closer to our goals. Discussing modalities and processes is very important. However, that will not have any effect unless there is a real change in intention resulting in a change in the political will of nations to affect concrete actions.

Please permit me to conclude by urging the Summit to heed the Koranic verse relevant to all change, whether for good or bad:

> "Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." (*The Holy Koran, XIII 11*)

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): Before I give the floor to the next speaker, I appeal to participants in the general debate to respect as much as possible the estimated speaking time they have provided to the Secretariat. This would greatly facilitate the work of the General Assembly.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. David Oddsson, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland.

Mr. Oddsson (Iceland): The United Nations is uniquely suited to the task of tackling the many global challenges that the world faces today, and has already done much good work in this respect. In fact, it is fair to say that with increasing globalization, the world needs the United Nations more than ever before. At the same time, greater demands are being made on the Organization. One consequence of growing globalization is to make ideas and information much

more accessible to the entire world. Thus, collective awareness of the fundamental rights of democracy and the rule of law are spreading among people in different places as never before.

An indication of this is that opinion surveys about worldwide attitudes to the United Nations show human rights to be a central issue in people's expectations of the United Nations. If anything, such expectations may be expected to grow stronger and the United Nations needs to respond to them. New times and greater demands call for changes in the organization and work of the United Nations. Thus the Security Council is a child of its time and reforms need to be expedited. Moreover, the Organization's record in peacekeeping operations has also been rather uneven over the past decade. However, with its valuable experience in this field, the United Nations has great potential to promote peace in regions of conflict. The Secretary-General's initiative in making a special study of peacekeeping operations deserves to be applauded. This is a well produced report which will help the Organization to draw up a clear strategy on this important issue.

Despite the fact that Iceland has a small population, we have contributed medical personnel and police officers to peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. The Icelandic Government is now drawing up proposals for ways to increase and broaden our participation in the civilian side of peacekeeping. Thus I made a particularly careful note that the report called for a greater emphasis on the rapid participation by civilian peacekeeping personnel, such as police, lawyers and other experts in order to speed up the establishment of lasting reconciliation and peace between parties in conflict.

Ultimately the potential of the United Nations for doing good depends on the will of its Member States as we represent them here. While this is quite right, it is also clearly a tautology. This is a political reality, which international organizations, such as the United Nations, inevitably face, not least with regard to security issues. Complaints about the lack of willingness among Member nations must not overshadow its successes in numerous fields. It is, however, the clear duty of all Members to ensure sufficient resources for the United Nations to undertake the task we entrust to the Organization. It is unacceptable for the United Nations to be starved of funds and even worse, if Members are late in making their required contributions, or fail to make them at all. At the same time, there is certainly still much scope for improving the operations and effectiveness of the United Nations. The Secretary-General's proposals in this respect are necessary and deserve to be supported.

One area of the United Nations activities has been moving increasingly into the spotlight. I am referring to environmental issues, which are often global in character and need to be solved accordingly. To achieve this as successfully as possible, we must consider not only how to share fairly among different nations the cost that these solutions involve, but also how to produce the maximum benefit for the global community as a whole.

One example concerns the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. As the Secretary-General points out in his millennium report, there is an obvious need to increase the use of renewable energy resources in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It follows that the potential for using renewable energy resources for power-intensive industries must not be restricted, even if this leads to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions in the countries where such energy resources are available. Such emissions will obviously be made wherever power-intensive industries operate. Implementation of the Kyoto Protocol should therefore be arranged so as to encourage the location of those industries as far as possible in places where clean, renewable energy resources are found, so that total emissions can be kept to a minimum. This would represent a global benefit for the environment.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Said Musa, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Foreign Affairs of Belize.

Mr. Musa (Belize): Brothers and Sisters all. Many of my colleagues address what is wrong with our world: the poverty, the inequality, the injustice, the violence, the hatred, the greed that is destroying the earth and its people. We all know the reality, all are shocked, if sometimes numbed, by the horrible statistics that show the unbelievable extent to which human evil and stupidity have brought us appalling misery and suffering.

I ask: is this state of affairs beyond our control? Do we believe that these problems are intractable and that nothing can be done? Or can we summon up the courage and the political will to take the practical and

cooperative decisions necessary to ensure a shared and better future for our peoples?

In the past, we looked to the nation State for solutions. Today the true centre of governance has changed dramatically. Transnational and multilateral organizations control our lives; they are the agencies of what we may call real, existing world government. That government is powerful, it rules the entire world; but it is not democratic. It is not just. And it is not accountable.

If we want this United Nations Organization to fulfil its lofty goals, indeed if we want it to remain relevant in the twenty-first century, we must remake it into an Organization that takes global governance away from the self-appointed few and brings greater democracy to all its operations.

The United Nations itself, acting democratically and responsibly, must be given the power to hold every agency of global governance to account; to put in place mechanisms for regular evaluation and correction, with means of ensuring compliance. These organizations must be made to act in accordance with the principles of a sustainable development that puts people first.

The prevention of deadly conflict, the elimination of hunger and chronic poverty, combating the deadly HIV/AIDS epidemic and other infectious diseases, managing global warming, confronting pervasive crime and violence, closing the digital divide and achieving universal quality education — the magnitude of the immediate and urgent tasks before us is too great to tackle without concerted action.

Globalization offers great possibilities for prosperity, security and human well-being, but only if the architects of globalization can be held to account, only if it becomes a globalization of solidarity.

In many small States like Belize, our economies are fragile and vulnerable. We live on the margins, and fear that unrestrained globalization will further marginalize us. But we must be bold and face the future convinced that together we can forge a more responsible and equitable globalization. At the time of Belize's independence, we committed ourselves to create a socio-economic framework where individual initiative is adequately rewarded within a socially responsible environment where education, health care and all the basic needs of our people are satisfied. We will maintain that commitment.

For the last half of the past century we fought to end colonialism and to bring freedom and democracy to our nations. Now we are called to a new appointment with history: to bring democracy to global governance, to share a better and more productive future where all can live in dignity and peace.

May the Almighty guide our deliberations and our actions.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ehud Barak, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the State of Israel.

Mr. Barak (Israel): Three millenniums ago in Jerusalem, the prophets Isaiah and Micah kindled the torch of harmony and justice among nations, and said:

> "and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more". (*The Holy Bible, Micah IV:3*)

Towards Jerusalem, abode of God's temple, Jews around the world have turned in prayer three times each day for 2,000 years, repeating the vow of their exiled ancestors:

> "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning." (*The Holy Bible, Psalms CXXXVII:5*)

Jerusalem, the eternal capital of Israel, now calls for a peace of honour, of courage and of brotherhood. We recognize that Jerusalem is also sacred to Muslims and Christians the world over and is cherished by our Palestinian neighbours. A true peace will reflect all these bonds. Jerusalem will remain united and open to all who love it.

The opportunity for peace in the Middle East is now at hand, and must not be missed. We envision a peace that will preserve the vital interests and the dignity of all sides. But no side can achieve 100 per cent of its dreams if we are to succeed. My Government has shown, in negotiations with Syria and with the Palestinians, as well as in our pullout from Lebanon, that it can make painful decisions for the sake of peace. It remains to be seen whether our counterparts are also capable of rising to the magnitude of the hour.

The States Members of the United Nations can lend a pivotal hand by encouraging the difficult process of reconciliation and by opposing any unilateral measures, which might well spark a renewed cycle of violence and obliterate the prospects of peace.

I call out to Chairman Arafat to join me in this historic passage. We are at the Rubicon, and no one of us can cross it alone. History will judge what we do in the next days and weeks. Were we courageous and wise enough to guide our region across the deep river of mistrust into a new land of reconciliation? Or did we shrink back at the water's edge, resigned to lie in wait for the rising tide of bloodshed and grief?

Fifty years ago, it took the shock of a Second World War and the worst genocide to bring world leaders to form the United Nations. In the name of the State of Israel, I commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for so masterfully conceiving this Summit, which powerfully declares our potential for solidarity. More than ever, the borders of faith and culture have receded, showing us just how close we are in our hopes and fears, how little time each of us has on this planet, and how much we have yet to repair and heal. If we are brave enough to manifest the simple but profound truth that the plight of individuals anywhere is the responsibility of leaders everywhere, we will be much closer to fulfilling those prophetic visions proclaimed long ago in Jerusalem.

May this historic meeting be a harbinger of hope for all humanity. May we muster the inspiration and the fortitude to bequeath to our children a better world, a brighter future, a more secure life. It is in our hands.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Bertie Ahern, Prime Minister of Ireland.

Mr. Ahern (Ireland): Throughout the 45 years of our United Nations membership, Ireland has been an unwavering supporter of this Organization. We have consistently valued its achievements, even if we have sometimes been frustrated by its shortcomings or grieved by its failures. We have striven to take the opportunities and responsibilities of membership seriously, in, for example, our contributions to peacekeeping, disarmament, development, human rights and humanitarian action. The credentials Ireland brings to this Millennium Summit, therefore, are those of a deeply committed United Nations Member.

But this Summit must take us beyond restatements of commitment. This must be a Summit of plain speaking and precise objectives. The two major documents prepared for our meeting — "We the Peoples", by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan (A/54/2000), and the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305) — go in the right direction. Both are lucid texts, which challenge us with frank analysis and specific proposals. They oblige us to refocus on the fundamental tasks of this Organization: dealing with war and dealing with want.

The statistics of poverty and inequality in our world are shocking and shameful: half the world's population struggling on less than two dollars a day; over a billion on less than one dollar; a quarter of a billion children of 14 and under working, sometimes in terrible conditions; and death from preventable and treatable diseases — 10 people will die of malaria in the five minutes I take to address the Assembly.

There was much talk some years ago of a new world order. A new order is indeed dawning. The capacity of globalization to transform our economies and societies is enormous. But, unless shaped by a value system, globalization will mean an ever more lopsided world. The level playing field will remain an illusion so long as a majority of players are ill-fed, ill-trained and ill-equipped.

Perhaps the phrase "fair world order" sums up better what we should strive for. It recognizes that we live in a society, not a market place. It admits of concepts of justice and human solidarity. It acknowledges that, while not everyone will live in the same way, we are all entitled to dignity and decency.

A genuine commitment to fairness has implications for policy-making in every area: in trade, investment and debt reduction, as well as in health, labour, gender equality and a host of others. "Coherence" may be an overused word, but it is an underused approach. I am pleased that the Declaration we are about to adopt at this Summit has such a broad range of commitments, and the specificity of the language and the time scales mean that we can and will be held accountable for delivery. If we urge policy coherence and precise targets on the United Nations, we must be individually prepared to adopt the same disciplines.

Ireland's current prosperity places a particular responsibility on our shoulders. One hundred and fifty

years ago we were a country ravaged by famine. When we joined the United Nations in 1955, we were markedly poorer than most of our European neighbours. Today, we have one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

Our history should make us generous, and it has: Irish people have a long tradition of working abroad in the service of others and have consistently shown extraordinary generosity in their private donations to development projects. Over the past two years, Ireland's official development assistance has grown at the fastest rate of any country in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Today, on behalf of the Government and the people of Ireland, I wish in this forum publicly to make a commitment to fully meeting the United Nations target of spending 0.7 per cent of gross national product on official development assistance. We are putting in place an interim target for the expansion of the programme by the end of 2002 of 0.45 per cent of gross national product, and we will reach the United Nations target by the end of 2007.

To help us make sure that this major expansion has the greatest impact, we are commencing a review of the structure and range of our aid programmes. We will, however, maintain a clear focus on poverty alleviation, and our policies will reflect the essential link between human rights and human development. We will particularly work to expand access to primary education, tackle the AIDS epidemic and improve the position of some of the world's most vulnerable groups.

Ireland's commitment to disarmament is well known, and we have shown a broad consistency of position, from our Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons initiative of 40 years ago to our current activities in the New Agenda Coalition. We are deeply concerned that the post-cold-war opportunities are not being fully grasped, and we will continue to avail ourselves of every opportunity to push for greater progress.

Our commitment to conflict resolution around the world has been sharpened by the success of our own peace process, in which the support of the international community has been both indispensable and deeply appreciated. We, in turn, are ready to share our experience in any situation where it may be felt to be helpful.

In many cases, conflict resolution requires effective peacekeeping. The report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations has a sobering conclusion:

> "Without renewed commitment on the part of Member States, significant institutional change and increased financial support, the United Nations will not be capable of executing the critical peacekeeping and peace-building tasks that the Member States assign to it in coming months and years." (*A/55/305, Executive Summary, p. viii*)

This must jolt the Security Council and the membership generally into action. The recommendations for change — policy, institutional and organizational — must be studied as a matter of urgent priority, and then acted upon. There has to be broad political will to do so. Ireland has for 40 years been among the leading contributors of personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations. We are rightly proud of the strength and quality of the contribution to United Nations peacekeeping by our army and police. We fully intend to maintain that contribution. But we want to do so in a context in which there is clarity of purpose, realistic planning, coherent organization and adequate funding.

The Secretary-General in his report rightly states that, when it was created, the United Nations reflected humanity's greatest hopes for a just and peaceful global community. Let us, as Member States, accept our collective responsibility to help the Organization realize its potential. This task is well under way, and the reforms that have been made and implemented in recent years have already helped to strengthen and revitalize the Organization. However, much remains to be done, and, in particular, we must redouble our efforts to make the Security Council more representative of the modern world and to work for equitable geographic representation.

Ireland wants to play its full part in this exercise of renewal. That is why, for only the third time ever and for the first time in more than 20 years, we are seeking a seat on the Security Council in next month's elections. Never has there been a more crucial, critical and challenging time to be a Security Council member. But we believe that our experience and our commitment fit us to rise to the challenge.

Our deliberations this week take place in the rarefied atmosphere of international diplomacy. But what the United Nations does, or fails to do, has an effect on the real lives of countless people around the world. Despite all our shortcomings, we can together make a difference. That should and must concentrate our minds at this Summit. Let us leave at the end of this week with a renewed sense of our shared goals and of how, urgently, we can achieve them.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mario Frick, Prime Minister of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Frick (Liechtenstein): Today, we are at the beginning of a new century and a new millennium. Never before in history has humanity undergone such far-reaching political, economic and social changes at such a breathtaking pace. We usually refer to this process as globalization. Information and communications technology empowers and links people all over the world. Globalization has brought benefits and opportunities, but it also holds risks, especially for those who are already in a very perilous position. The challenges of globalization also make addressing issues such as the enhanced inclusion, participation and accountability of non-State actors a necessity. The United Nations is the only forum of truly global scope, and thus offers the only opportunity for us to address these issues.

Our highly interdependent world is ailing. Serious and mutually reinforcing threats to our future welfare assume numerous forms. We can confront many of these threats at the local or national level. However, a large number of problems — such as global warming, population growth, environmental degradation, the widening North-South gap, the illegal trade in narcotics and organized crime — must be addressed primarily at the global level. The United Nations system offers the only obvious set of institutional mechanisms to address them. We appreciate in particular the principle of equality of nations in this approach. An international consensus is being elaborated. It is not the stronger telling the weaker where to go. Reason and agreement achieved after thorough discussion show us the way.

This Millennium Summit coincides with the tenth anniversary of Liechtenstein's membership in the United Nations. When we joined the Organization on 18 September 1990, at the end of the cold war, many of the constraints that the United Nations had to face for 45 years were removed, and there were great expectations that the Organization would finally be able to carry out its mandates. But the removal of the constraints did not make the solution of the problems easier, and the United Nations was not fully equipped to face the upcoming challenges.

Calls for the international community to act are usually addressed to the United Nations. Now, at the beginning of the new millennium, we, the Member States, must demonstrate that we are willing to empower the United Nations to act on our behalf. We must therefore put the necessary resources at the Organization's disposal, and we must be prepared to accept limitations when it comes to our own freedom to act.

The respect for and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law have been a high priority of Liechtenstein's United Nations engagement throughout our 10 years of membership. Within the group of like-minded countries, Liechtenstein participated actively in the work to create the International Criminal Court (ICC), one of the outstanding achievements in the area of international law, and we hope that the Court will become operational soon. The ICC will lead to full accountability for the commission of the most serious crimes under international law and it has a strong potential to help prevent conflicts. In this context, I would like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his report "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000). I agree with the Secretary-General when he says that prevention is first and foremost a challenge of political leadership and that we must have a clear understanding of the causes of conflicts in order to prevent them. We support the creation of a "culture of prevention", but this process will require a concerted effort by the membership of the United Nations and a change in our collective mindset which is immersed in a responsive approach to crisis management.

The future of the United Nations is important for millions of people. We, the peoples, owe it to ourselves and to future generations to work for a strengthened, effective and efficient United Nations that will help make the twenty-first century a century of peace and prosperity for all.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency the Right Honourable Lester Bird, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Bird (Antigua and Barbuda): This Millennium Summit will adopt a Declaration projecting a vision for the world. It will be a high-sounding document filled with laudable objectives and admirable pledges. We will assert that globalization should become a positive force for all the world's people. We will acknowledge the importance of creating a shared future based upon our common humanity. Importantly, we will insist that global policies and measures be devised with the effective participation of developing countries to meet their needs.

Many have little faith that the words of this vision will be met by the deeds necessary to make it a reality. So, what do I say? I say: Surprise me. Surprise all the millions of people who live in abject poverty. Surprise all the children who suffer from malnutrition and are denied even a rudimentary education. Surprise those who are born with no expectation except that of a short and miserable life.

Surprise small countries like mine. Surprise us by showing that even though we are small and powerless, account will be taken of our conditions and our views by the big and powerful.

Surprise the countries that are burdened by debt, whose people repay that debt to the coffers of the rich in misery and despair.

The evidence at hand provides no comfort to the poor and the powerless, for the world that turns on the cusp of the new millennium is still one in which right parades in the armour of might and justice is cloaked in the raiment of the rich.

Even this body, the United Nations — the repository of mankind's highest aspirations — has become marginalized by the dictates of a few. Its principles of a world based on faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small have become a hollow echo.

The sustained prosperity of industrialized countries in the last 50 years and the more recent performance of a few developing countries have camouflaged a more gruesome reality, and that is the relentless growth in the number of the very poor.

Is it not a woeful indictment that although 25 countries were identified by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to benefit by the end of the year 2000 under the much vaunted Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, not one has yet received an actual cash draw-down?

The world's economic and political agenda is now devised and dictated by a few of its most powerful Governments. The Group of 7 has arrogated to itself not only the role of the world's decision maker, but also of its enforcer.

It appears, furthermore, that in arrogating this role to themselves, the members of the G-7 have been motivated by narrow, national political concerns at the expense of the wider interests of global economic growth and international political stability.

Recently, several small countries — Antigua and Barbuda included — have experienced the most blatant disregard for the rules of international law; rules that have been spelled out by the General Assembly and upheld by the International Court of Justice.

Those rules specify quite clearly that States cannot intervene in areas solely within the jurisdiction of other States, and international organizations are restricted from intervention within the domestic jurisdiction of States. Yet, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an organization created by the G-7, has unilaterally devised a set of standards for taxation that it wants to impose on other jurisdictions. The OECD is also demanding that States change their domestic laws to allow the tax authorities of OECD countries unfettered access to banking information. Should States fail to yield to the OECD's demands, its member States have threatened to impose sanctions on those countries.

The rule of law has become the rule of the jungle. Rules no longer apply, only might is right. All of this, incidentally, is being done because the OECD — usually a warrior in the battle for more global competition — believes that its member States will lose capital to other States because of their more competitive tax regimes. Amazingly, these competitive tax rates are described by the OECD as "harmful tax competition".

Let me be clear: none of this has anything to do with money-laundering and other financial crimes. While the spin doctors of the OECD have attempted to

cloak their position in moral rectitude with references to the evils of money-laundering, "harmful tax competition" has nothing to do with money-laundering.

Money-laundering is handled by a separate institution, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which has established criteria for evaluating countries that are cooperative in the prevention of money-laundering. I am pleased to say that my own country, Antigua and Barbuda, successfully passed the FATF evaluation last June, and many of the countries on the OECD's list are in the forefront of the fight against financial crime.

This OECD action is designed to impose its unilaterally created standards on States with low tax regimes so that it can justify and maintain what amounts to a high-tax cartel. What the OECD is doing is wrong in international law, and violates both the letter and spirit of countless resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. If the Charter of this Organization means anything — and if the Declaration of this Summit is to give any credibility to the United Nations — the OECD should cease bullying small countries in forced bilateral negotiations and should cease to hold sanctions over their heads like swords of Damocles. The OECD should resolve to halt its insidious process and place any discussion on tax issues in a multilateral forum, where it rightly belongs.

This OECD issue and others like it are symptoms of the much larger problem of global governance. My country acknowledges and upholds the right of the G-7 countries to be at the centre of global decision-making. But it cannot be an exclusive right. Others, too, have a right to participation. We, too, represent people with a legitimate interest in the way in which our shared planet is managed.

It is for that reason that my country is ready to assume additional financial responsibility for United Nations peacekeeping operations. We believe that every country has an obligation to contribute to the maintenance of world stability and to stop the waste of human life. We recognize that participation has a cost, and we stand ready to play our part.

In turn, however, the large and the powerful must also accept that the table of decision-making must be wide enough to accommodate representatives of all the world's people — developed and developing, large and small.

When this Organization was conceived 55 years ago, leaders of States committed themselves to a world governed by justice and moral law, one in which they asserted the pre-eminence of right over might and the general good against sectional aims. With the passage of time, the world has witnessed a withdrawal from those commitments, if not a reversal of them. The world's people are today highly sceptical of what their leaders say in this Assembly. I say to the Assembly: "Surprise me, and surprise them".

Let the Millennium Declaration we issue go forth to the four corners of the world as a programme that each nation will implement to create a truly shared future based on our common humanity. The world's people would welcome that surprise.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Tony Blair, Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Blair (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): The challenge for the United Nations is the same as for all of us: how to respond to change. It must become better organized, better managed, with the direction fit for the awesome tasks it faces. Fortunately, we have a Secretary-General who speaks to us with great wisdom and candour about what must be done and is leading a United Nations ready to reform. We, the Member States, must match his vigour.

I want to talk about one area for reform: peacekeeping operations. Today the United Nations struggles to cope with the new types of peacekeeping operation which current conditions demand. Whether in Africa, East Timor or the Balkans, it is no longer good enough to organize "Blue Helmet" operations as if they were still largely geared to marking an agreed ceasefire line between two States that have consented to a United Nations presence. The typical case is now fast-moving and volatile. The appalling attack on United Nations staff in West Timor demonstrates this for us vividly.

I am proud of the role that British forces play in United Nations operations, not least in Sierra Leone, where British soldiers are still held hostage today. As we work for their release, we should pay tribute to the courage and commitment of all our forces in United Nations missions right around the world.

But United Nations soldiers need to work within a system better geared to dealing with the demands placed on them today. We need United Nations units appropriate for more robust peacekeeping that can be inserted quickly, rather than whatever the Secretary-General's staff has been able to gather from reluctant Member States.

This means a new contract between the United Nations and its members. We must be prepared to commit our forces to United Nations operations. The United Nations must alter radically its planning, intelligence and analysis, and develop a far more substantial professional military staff. The Brahimi report (A/55/305) is right. We should implement it, and do so within a 12-month time scale.

My second point concerns Africa. There is a dismal record of failure in Africa on the part of the developed world that shocks and shames our civilization. Nowhere are more people dying needlessly from starvation, from disease, from conflict: deaths caused not by acts of fate, but by bad governance, factional rivalries, State-sponsored theft and corruption. Nowhere are more people being left behind on the wrong side of a growing digital and educational divide, children being denied the opportunities that will transform the lives of children elsewhere in the world.

Yet 30 years ago, the same depressing analysis might have been made of parts of Asia or Latin America. There can be change. There can be hope for Africa. There is political leadership, business opportunity and, above all, surely, will on behalf of the people for a better future in Africa. We must be partners in the search for that change and that hope. By 2004, under the new British Government, we will have increased our aid budget by 70 per cent since we came into office, much of it going to Africa. Yet individually, none of us has a decisive impact. We need the economies of scale and the political will to broker change that comes only by combining our efforts.

We should use this unique Summit for a universal purpose: to start agreeing on a way forward for Africa. For the first time, we have in one place — here — the leaders who hold Africa's destiny in their hands. I urge all Members to ask one question: What can we do for Africa?

We need a new partnership for Africa, in which Africans lead but the rest of the world is committed, and in which all the problems are dealt with not separately, but together, in a coherent and unified plan. Britain stands ready to play its part with the rest of the world and the leaders of Africa in formulating such a plan.

This is the time to renew the United Nations, and this is why: our brief speeches may not change the world, but is it still not better that we are here, talking to one another, rather than fighting each other? The sentiments we express here may often be the same, but at least they are the sentiments of unity, peace, hope and cooperation. We may be frustrated sometimes by the way the United Nations works but, for all its imperfections, at least it is a force for good, and our desire is that it do more, not less. If the United Nations did not exist, we would be forced to invent it.

Finally, I do not wish to leave the United Nations without saying this: the treatment of Aung San Suu Kyi by the Burmese regime is a disgrace. I call upon the Burmese Government to let her go free, and I call on fellow world leaders to back that call.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Gerhard Schroeder, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Schroeder (Germany) (*spoke in German; English text furnished by the delegation*): The dawn of the new millennium is an appropriate time to take stock and look together for ways of strengthening the United Nations as the central Organization for maintaining international peace and security. At the same time, we Germans will be celebrating the tenth anniversary of the restoration of our unity as one State.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many nations and particularly the people in the East and the West that have supported Germany as we travelled along this important path. I would also like to emphasize my country's unwavering commitment to the world Organization. Germany was, in fact, given a second chance after the Second World War. We very much want to prove ourselves worthy of this chance by demonstrating our wholehearted commitment to democracy and human rights, to deepening European integration and to strengthening the United Nations.

The United Nations will be able successfully to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century only if it uses its instruments and financial resources

efficiently and sets itself specific priorities. This should include a reduction of the annual agenda to the real key issues of our age. Does the Assembly not believe that that would be worth jointly bringing about?

As to the world Organization's unchanged key task — maintaining international peace and security — ever greater emphasis is being placed on crisis prevention. I truly believe that we must draw the necessary conclusions from the successes, as well as the failures, of recent peace missions. This will include, above all, reform of the Security Council. The Council must become both more efficient and more representative. Should the number of permanent members be increased, Germany would be prepared to shoulder this responsibility.

Safeguarding and strengthening human rights also continues to be a main priority. Effective protection of human rights is an important prerequisite for peace and stability. The German Government very strongly advocates the early entry into force of the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Finally, a third priority for the United Nations is its commitment to economic and social ,progress, which, incidentally, also necessitates fair international economic relations. With the 1999 Cologne debt relief initiative, which the Group of Eight continued at its Summit in Okinawa, we created the prerequisites for combining debt relief with a strategy to combat poverty.

Germany will forgive the entire bilateral debt of the most heavily indebted poor countries. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called upon the international community to endeavour to halve the number of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015. I can only say that I expressly welcome this initiative, which I would very much like to support. The German Government will therefore develop an action plan detailing how Germany itself can help to ensure that this objective is actually achieved. It would be good if as many countries as possible committed themselves to that goal.

In order to improve the development opportunities of many, especially the poorest developing countries, they must also be granted access to the modern information and communications technology. I would like to see these countries being given greater assistance than hitherto. Stronger involvement on the part of the business community in the work of the United Nations is also important. Secretary-General Annan provided good and important impetus for this with his Global Compact project. Should we not enhance this cooperation, and also consider additional forms of and further areas for such cooperation? I would like to propose that the Secretary-General convene as quickly as possible a working group of business leaders from around the world to develop concrete ideas on this subject.

Making this world Organization more efficient also means that it must be provided with a proper, sustainable financial basis. All Member States are called upon to do what they can within their respective financial capabilities to help fund the Organization, without tying their support to additional conditions. We must realize that the United Nations is not just an anonymous Organization. We are the United Nations. Each one of us can and should make a contribution towards a capable world Organization in the twenty-first century. Germany will not shy away from its responsibility.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia.

Mr. Howard (Australia): The ideals a nation holds for itself, and for others, are often found more in the everyday speech of its people than in the rhetoric of either politics or diplomacy. Thus, in Australia it is said that all men and women, and by extension all nations, are entitled to a "fair go". For Australians, those two short words carry within them the universal right to freedom, to the peaceful pursuit of prosperity and to the attainment of self-reliance and self-respect. At the beginning of a new century, it is appropriate to recognize and applaud the effort and achievement of the United Nations in striving for these goals.

Australia was a founding Member of the United Nations. In all the years since, our fellow Member States have never found us wanting in practical support for countries in distress, for international human rights or for meeting the pressing economic needs of the developing world. Indeed, bridging the economic divide must remain a key objective for us all.

We are, and will always be, committed to the United Nations and the principles of mutual support upon which it was founded. The concept of a "fair go" requires not merely passive observance of others' efforts but active assistance in their endeavours.

Mr. Gurirab (Namibia) took the Chair.

Australia is blessed with natural resources, animated by the creativity of people drawn from around the globe, and shares with every other nation on earth ties of history or geography or culture or mutual interest. In claiming our rights as a sovereign nation, we freely acknowledge the contribution we must make to others. We know that for nations, as with individuals, no rights come without responsibility, no prosperity comes without price. For that reason, since 1948 Australia has willingly participated in over 30 United Nations peacekeeping and peace-monitoring operations, including United Nations efforts in Korea, the Middle East and Cambodia. Most recently, we acted upon the specific request of the Security Council to help restore safety and security to the people of East Timor.

The success of the International Force in East Timor operation is self-evident, and I wish to acknowledge, without qualification, the utter professionalism and dedication of every member of the international forces. Australia has also been proud to be a major contributor — both through its significant involvement in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) peacekeeping operations and through its aid programme — to the continuing effort under UNTAET.

The road to true peace and prosperity for East Timor will be long and it will be hard. The tragic incident overnight at Atambua, claiming the lives of three United Nations personnel close to the East Timor border, illustrates the continuing danger of the situation and the threat posed by the militia.

Your continuing support will be vital if East Timor is to complete the journey begun by the United Nations a year ago towards true independence and autonomy for the East Timorese people.

Finally, colleagues, we all want this Organization to be well-equipped to meet the challenges of the future. Australia believes that this can best be done through the United Nations focusing on its core strengths and responsibilities, such as the peaceful resolution of disputes, disarmament and the relief of suffering and want. We also believe that aspects of the United Nations treaty committee system need reform. Australia's recent experience has been that some of these committees give too little weight to the views of democratically elected Governments and that they go beyond their mandates.

Australia will intensify its work with other States on reform of the treaty committee system. We have recently announced a series of measures aimed at improving the operation of the United Nations treaty committee system. Australia's strategic engagement with these committees will be dependent on the extent to which effective reform occurs.

Australia endorses calls to expand the Security Council's permanent and non-permanent membership in line with today's realities and to improve the Council's effectiveness and authority. A better geographical spread is needed. In particular, Australia has been a long-standing supporter of permanent membership of the Security Council for Japan.

Over the coming weeks, Australia will have the honour of hosting the first Olympic Games of the new century. I hope that this Summit and those Games, each in its own way, will help cement the cause of peace throughout the world.

The Acting Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Arturo Vallarino, Vice-President of the Republic of Panama.

Mr. Vallarino (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Designated by Her Excellency Ms. Mireya Moscoso, President of the Republic of Panama, I would like to convey sincere greetings and congratulations to the Co-Presidents of the Millennium Summit and to His Excellency Secretary-General Kofi Annan, whose efforts for this Organization we would like to acknowledge publicly.

It is true that, in the United Nations, we have many things to regret and to rectify. Nevertheless, the United Nations, in its impressive development and despite a few errors, has become the great repository of the trust and the hopes of a world which yearns to live in peace and prosperity.

In the midst of our feverish activity, in the world there are still major wars that have claimed the lives of 5 million people in the last decade, many of these due to racial and religious intolerance. We cannot be lenient towards those who are becoming the aggressors and the killers of our time. In order to confront the situation we must design a comprehensive programme which would

effectively prevent conflicts and which would strongly commit regional organizations to its implementation.

Panama feels that the proposals made by the G-8 in Berlin last December and in Cologne last June in the area of conflict prevention, as well as the priorities pointed out by the European Union, provide the correct approaches to design this comprehensive programme that we require.

It is high time that peacekeeping became a preventive act, and no longer something imposed sometimes belatedly by the Security Council of the United Nations.

The Republic of Panama believes it crucial to distinguish between peacekeeping operations undertaken in accordance with the United Nations Charter and interventions in domestic conflicts that are not necessarily a threat to peace in a given region. We believe that the time has come thoroughly to discuss not only the scale of assessments and arrears, but also the way in which these operations are planned, implemented and paid for. We understand that we cannot remain mired in obsolete structures and ideas, but changes must occur formally and not through the measures of those in authority, who may act on behalf of majorities that may not agree with their actions.

This Summit represents the ultimate effort of all nations to enact lasting agreements and to build upon them a new world ethic that would lead us to a permanent peace imbued with security and harmony. We must also adopt a commitment to altering the composition of the Security Council, increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent members and restricting and regulating the use of the veto. In this way, we can adapt it to today's realities and demands. It is also crucial that delays in the payment of contributions by some Member States no longer be used as an instrument of pressure in order to achieve particular objectives. Finally, we call on all the heads of State and Government present here to put an end to the existing disagreements between States concerning the authority and jurisdiction of the various United Nations organs.

In the Secretary-General's own words,

> "Building a twenty-first century safer and more equitable than the twentieth is a task that requires the determined efforts of every state and every individual." (*A/54/2000, para. 369*)

The Republic of Panama, strengthened today in its independence and individuality, wishes to contribute faithfully with all its power to strengthening the postulates of the United Nations within this process of change.

The Acting Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jules Rattankoemar Ajodhia, Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname.

Mr. Ajodhia (Suriname): I take pleasure in informing the General Assembly that a new, democratically elected Government was recently installed in the Republic of Suriname, which I have the honour to represent at this unique occasion of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, which has brought together the largest gathering of government leaders in modern history.

At the outset, I wish to reconfirm that the Government and people of Suriname remain fully committed to the lofty goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as the cornerstone of civilized national and international behaviour within and between nations in order to guarantee and safeguard sustainable peace and development for every individual on this planet.

My Government wishes to pay tribute to both Co-Chairpersons of the Millennium Summit and considers the sharing of the gavel to be a symbolic reflection of the emerging awareness that a successful deliberation of the main theme of our Summit — "The role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" — will largely depend on the ability of both the North and the South to reach a consensus in defining the future role of the United Nations and in agreeing on how to make the United Nations a more effective instrument in the hands of the world's people, and more specifically in the interest of the global poor.

Affluence and prosperity in some parts of our world have not shielded the majority of the world's population from the perils of uncertainty and despair as a consequence of war, gross violations of human rights, corruption, the squandering of natural resources, and abject poverty and living conditions, which are an affront to the dignity of humanity.

While we have seen unprecedented technological and economic gains during the past half-century, today 1.2 billion people still have to live on less than $1 a

day. We therefore commend Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his bold initiative to challenge our thinking and future actions through the launching on 3 April 2000 of his millennium report, entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century". This report includes an action plan to make globalization work for all people, in the developed and developing worlds alike.

In response to the Secretary-General's proposals, I wish to inform the Assembly that my Government has already decided to give the highest priority to reaching the education, public health and poverty-reduction targets within the time-frame envisaged in the millennium report.

It was some 55 years ago, after the Second World War, that humanity stood up and, in its quest for peace, stability and development, created the United Nations. Since then, the United Nations has grown from 50 to over 180 Member States. The Organization is, however, confronted with serious financial problems affecting, among others, the financing of the United Nations Development Programme.

We therefore call upon the international community to reverse this negative trend and to ensure that the United Nations is provided in the twenty-first century with the resources it needs to carry out its mandates, as agreed upon by the Member States.

In the context of the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, my Government would like to underscore the call to restore the central position of the General Assembly as the only universally representative body of the United Nations, as well as the revitalization of the role of the Economic and Social Council in global governance and economic, financial and security matters, and to that effect to establish a closer working relationship with the Security Council and with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and other relevant multilateral organizations.

My Government attaches great importance to the reform of the Security Council in order to make it more representative in the light of the increased membership of the United Nations, and to enhance the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness in the twenty-first century.

We reiterate our call for a complete elimination of all nuclear weapons as promised at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, since this is the only man-made global threat that has the capacity to destroy all life on Earth in the twenty-first century.

We also wish to call upon all Members of the United Nations and other international organizations to enhance the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and to complete the development of a vulnerability index for small island developing States that is not limited to island States. Many of those States have set an example in equity and solidarity, in tolerance, in non-violence, in respect for nature and in shared responsibility, and should therefore be included in the quest for global governance and a new spirit in international cooperation that is based on inclusiveness, equity, transparency and, above all, participation by all so as to ensure a voice for large and small countries in the management of world affairs.

As a commitment to the conservation of the world's tropical rain forests, my country has declared 15 areas to be protected areas, covering a wide range of ecosystems from tropical forests in the south to coastal formations in the north, thereby making Suriname's nature conservation system one of the most representative in South America. This is evidence of our strong tradition of nature conservation and ought to be seen as a contribution of my country to mankind in the twenty-first century.

In closing, I wish to reiterate and reaffirm our faith in the United Nations and its Charter as being indispensable in our universal quest for a more just, equitable and peaceful world. My Government is pleased to endorse the Millennium Declaration as a useful instrument to strengthen our collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity and to create a shared future based upon our common humanity.

The Acting Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and elected President of the Palestinian Authority.

Mr. Arafat (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased and honoured to participate today as the representative of Palestine and of the Palestinian people on this great occasion of special importance for us, the Palestinians.

The end of the second millennium and the beginning of the third millennium, which we celebrate today, is marked by the birth of Jesus Christ 2000 years ago, in Bethlehem, Palestine.

We meet today at United Nations Headquarters to work to enhance the United Nations prestige. The United Nations has been a contemporary of the question of Palestine since its inception, and still remains responsible for shaping and achieving a just solution to that issue. In addition, the international community that you, leaders of the world, represent is still tenaciously holding onto its global vision for the future, which we shall elaborate together through this Summit. This vision relies on the specific just principle of asserting the right of peoples under foreign occupation to self-determination.

On this basis, Palestinian people everywhere look out to you from their homeland, from refugee camps and from the Diaspora to send out a collective cry from the depth of the pain and lengthy suffering that has lasted for 52 years. This takes place while we confront Israeli attempts at the Judaization of Jerusalem, land confiscation, the building of illegal Israeli settlements, the siege imposed upon Bethlehem, and the lack of honest and accurate implementation of the agreements signed by Israel.

Let the Millennium Summit be the beginning of the end of the gravest and most difficult refugee tragedy in the world. May it be the beginning of the end of the historical oppression that befell our people, and signal a new life for the Palestinian people. May the Summit prove to be a new beginning for all the peoples of the Middle East, so that a just and comprehensive peace may reign there. May it be a promising beacon of hope for the region, and especially for its children and coming generations.

The Palestinian people and its leadership have worked in earnest towards the fulfilment of the promise to achieve the peace of the brave. We have made a strategic decision to commit ourselves to the peace process and have made significant and painful concessions in order to arrive at a reasonable compromise acceptable to both sides. We have accepted a Palestinian State on less than a quarter of the historical territory of Palestine.

As for Holy Jerusalem, the cradle of Christianity and the site of Prophet Muhammad's ascension to Heaven, we have agreed to share it and to eliminate barriers and borders there — which is in contrast to attempts at monopolizing it — as a response to exclusivity and rejection of our rights. At the same time, we remain committed to our national rights over East Jerusalem, the capital of our State and the shelter of our Sacred Sites, as well as our rights on the Christian and Islamic Holy Sites, while maintaining that the City should be accessible to all and open onto West Jerusalem.

We shall continue to do our utmost during the short upcoming period to arrive at a final settlement between Palestine and Israel. We invite the Israeli Government to do likewise. We shall cooperate fully with the two sponsors of the peace process — the United States and the Russian Federation — as well as with the Arab and European countries, the Islamic States, China, Japan, the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, and our other friends. We thank them all for the efforts they have exerted on all levels, and at the Camp David summit. We thank President Clinton for his good offices and highly appreciate his great efforts, and we are grateful for what is happening now in cooperation with President Mubarak, President Chirac and with friendly Arab and international leaders.

As you well know, the sides participating in the peace process have agreed to reach a final settlement by 13 September of this year. You are also well aware that the five-year interim period expired on 4 May 1999. World leaders then requested that we postpone any decision relating to a declaration of our statehood until the holding of Israeli elections. These facts oblige us to take certain steps to safeguard the rights of our people, while acting in accordance with the decisions taken by our leadership and our legal institutions concerning the need to create the State of Palestine by that September date.

At the same time, some of our friends and brothers consider that reaching a final settlement requires allowing an additional chance for these efforts to succeed, though this may prove to be the last chance for the present peace process. The Palestinian Central Council will decide on this matter within the next few days, taking into account United Nations resolutions and our people's right to self-determination and the establishment of its independent State. We shall be cooperating with the United Nations and the other parties involved at present in the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are hopeful that we can

obtain the collective positive support of the members of the Council and of the General Assembly for our cause, since you have already agreed to resolution 181 (1947) on two States, one State being Palestinian Arab, as well as for lifting the blockade imposed on the brotherly Iraqi people.

I would like sincerely to express my heartfelt thanks to you and to the Secretary-General, on behalf of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation, for your support and solidarity with us, a crucial factor for us as we approach the moment of freedom, justice and peace.

May peace be upon you all.

The Acting Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Farouk Al-Shara', Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Al-Shara' (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am honoured to speak before this august forum on behalf of His Excellency Bashar Al-Assad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic, and to convey to you his warm greetings and best wishes that this Millennium Summit will realize the aspirations of the peoples of the world.

The Syrian Arab people, with its ancient civilization and heritage of human values, like all other peoples of the world, look forward to the new millennium with a new optimism for opening a new page, a new chapter, where humanity will be spared the enormous costs it was forced to pay in blood, sweat and suffering, throughout history, and particularly in the twentieth century.

Fortunately, the wars of the last century, with the high cost in human lives and material destruction, were paralleled by achievements and discoveries that were among the most important in the history of mankind, particularly in science, knowledge, advanced technology and telecommunications, and by the ability to move with stunning speed not merely from one continent to another but from one planet to another, without many believing that the day of judgement is nigh.

The thorny question facing mankind is whether there is an organic linkage between manufacturing the instruments of death and destruction and fashioning the constructive means of development. While the question is not a categorical negative, this Millennium Summit is required to think deep and do its utmost to break down this linkage so that the peoples of the world can be confident that scientific and technological advancement will be a means for the benefit of mankind, a means to enrich the lives of individuals materially and spiritually, and not a means to destroy them and their values.

The other challenge facing today's world is globalization. If it is well-managed, we will then benefit by opening doors previously constantly closed in the face of our States. If we ignore globalization, its evils will reach into every aspect of our daily lives, into the very depth of our civilizations.

On another front, this Millennium Summit cannot minimize the importance of two primordial issues. Without a solution to those two issues, no form of genuine peace can be realized. The first is the elimination of foreign occupation and the return of refugees to their homes, the rejection of any pretext under the banner of either religion or security to usurp the lands of others by force. That requires an end to Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and Arab Jerusalem to the line of 4 June 1967.

The second issue is the eradication of nuclear weapons and the serious endeavour to realize the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) without making an exception for any State. The foremost requirement in this regard is to transform the Middle East into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. The need of peoples everywhere for a world free of nuclear weapons is matched in importance only by their need for a world free of poverty, disease and violence. The role of the United Nations in all the fundamental issues faced by the Millennium Summit remains important, particularly if we succeed in comprehensively reforming its structure to render it more democratic and effective, and more able to implement its resolutions without double standards or twisted interpretations.

In this Millennium Summit, in confronting the myriad problems facing the international community in the new century, it is clear to us all that their solution cannot be achieved by unilateral efforts. That requires a collective effort where reason prevails over hotheadedness, where courage prevails over megalomania.

It is high time for us all to realize that the era of brute force is past, that injustice cannot solidify the

rights of aggressors, however many years have passed. The experience of South Africa in ending apartheid some years ago and the experience in southern Lebanon in rolling back Israeli occupation some months ago unambiguously show that had reason prevailed from the beginning of the dispute, we would have reached the same result but with fewer victims, in a shorter time, and with less suffering for both sides. At any rate, our confidence in the abilities of peoples is great. We are confident that their aspiration to justice, peace and equality among all will usher in this new century the auspicious prospect of achieving the interests and security of all humankind.

May peace be with you.

The Acting Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Highness Sayyid Faisal bin Ali bin Faisal Al-Said, Minister of National Heritage and Culture, Special Representative of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman.

Mr. Al-Said (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is a great honour for me to act as Special Representative of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, Sultan of Oman, at this historic General Assembly Summit. His Majesty has directed me to convey his greetings and his best wishes to this gathering, which is marking the beginning of the third millennium with hopeful, optimistic aspirations for a better, brighter future for all the nations and peoples of the world.

The United Nations will always be the leafy tree under whose shade nations may repose, and whose fruit all peoples may enjoy. Nations provide the Organization with the means to ensure its viability and continuity, and peoples with a fertile environment to ensure abundance and productiveness.

We convey our thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the Secretary-General for his ongoing efforts to promote the role of the Organization and its agencies and to raise its performance to the highest standards so that it can address the challenges of the new century and meet the needs of nations and the aspirations of their peoples.

Our thanks go also to the Secretary-General's staff for their assistance in preparing the report (A/54/2000) on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century and on the reforms sought by the Secretary-General. Such reforms can be achieved only with the collective determination of Member States to reform the structure of the United Nations, and especially to reform the Security Council by enlarging its membership to ensure equitable geographical representation in a way that reflects the ambitions and aspirations of all peoples and that is characterized by transparency.

We value all collective efforts to enhance world peace and stability, and to affirm the equal sovereignty of all States, large and small, in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and with the principles of international law.

The importance of this Summit lies in our ability to adopt a programme of action that articulates a new economic and development concept for all nations based on their respective experiences and successes. Having just crossed the threshold of the new millennium, we should take advantage of the half-century of experience of various international organizations, United Nations agencies and programmes, and other related bodies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, as well as other international and regional organizations, to help developing countries cope with ongoing revolutionary advances in information technology and build their economies in a way that will ensure dignity and security for their peoples.

In that connection, we stress the need to reform the economies of the developing countries, which constitute the largest segment of the world market and which possess vast natural resources and raw materials. We would also propose that economically developed countries should take bold, sweeping decisions to bring about greater world growth and a more stable and just world economy through debt reduction and other concessionary measures.

Here, the United Nations bears a great responsibility to create economic and social conditions that are more conducive to peace, stability and coexistence. We therefore stress our support for resolution 53/22, by which the Assembly declared 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. As my delegation said in the Assembly in September 1999, we look forward to concerted action to adopt an effective mechanism for serious, positive dialogue aimed at peaceful coexistence characterized by tolerance and forgiveness.

Peace has been a deep-seated principle of the Sultanate of Oman since the very beginning of its

current renaissance. The Sultanate believes in a comprehensive peace, and hopes that the time has now come for achieving peace and concord in the Middle East. Hence, we renew our appeal to the international community, particularly the two sponsors of the peace process and the European Union, to help all the parties and guide them in the right direction, taking advantage of the progress made thus far to bring about a lasting regional peace that future generations will be able to enjoy.

We welcome the fact that Israel has responded to the will of the international community by withdrawing from southern Lebanon. That was a significant step in the right direction. We hope that the Israeli Government will follow a similar line of action on the Palestinian and the Syrian tracks by meeting its obligations and implementing all the agreements reached at Madrid, in accordance with the principle of land for peace and with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), so that full rights can be restored to those who legitimately possess them, so that regional peace and stability can be attained, and so that hostilities between Israel and neighbouring Arab countries can vanish forever. The region could thus experience a new era of cooperation and coexistence instead of hostility and war, and future generations will be able to live in harmony and peace.

We appeal to all the world's nations without exception to work together for peace and security everywhere in the world, to avoid disastrous wars and to make possible a future in which love and brotherhood prevail among all the peoples of the world, enabling them to devote their effort and their talent to developing their nations in an environment of peace and tranquillity free from fear of war and from destructive weapons.

The meeting rose at 2.20 p.m.